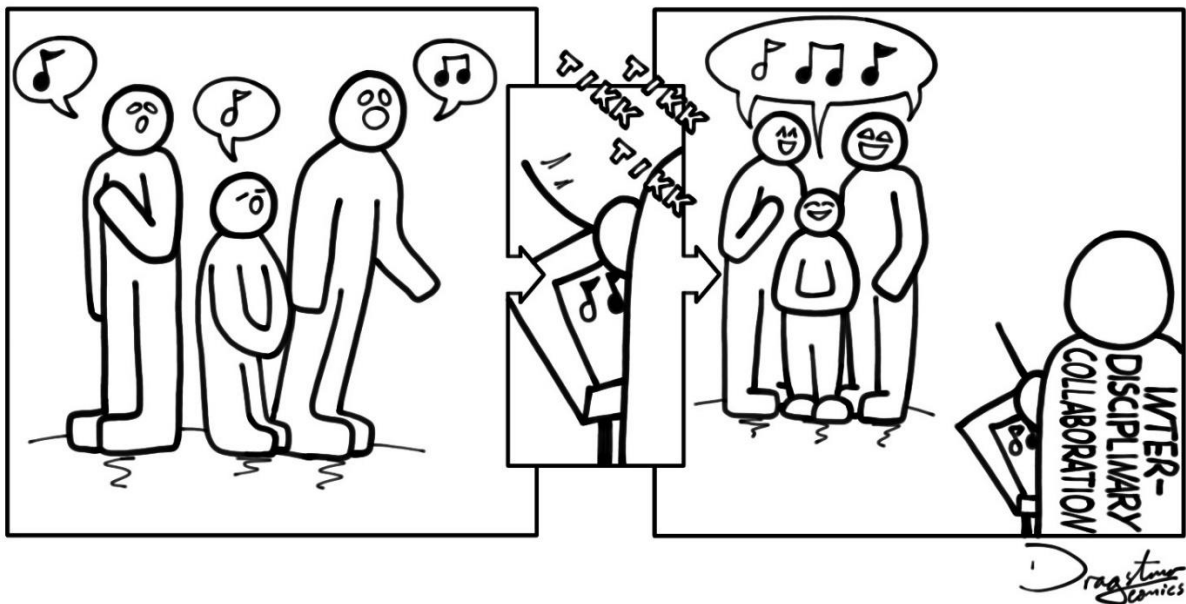# Is the Choir in Tune?

A thesis on interdisciplinary collaboration between children, teachers and child welfare workers from the experiences and perspectives of children

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«Riktig forstått, riktig møtt, kan lidelse vendes til velsignelse, for den utdyper forståelse av selvet og livet»

-Ferdinand Oscar Finne 1910-1999.
(Borrowed from https://www.ordtak.no/sitat.php?id=8200 29.04.2019)

"Properly understood, properly met, suffering can be turned into blessing, for it deepens understanding of the self and life"

Abstract

This thesis is conducted in Norway. After the ratification and embedding of the UNCRC in Norwegian law it is recognised that efforts are being made to ensure children's rights. However, because there has been an increase of children receiving measures by the Norwegian child welfare organisation, other public sectors, like the school, are progressively being invited to participate in collaborative efforts with the child welfare organisation and the child in question. This development, including children's increased rights, entails that collaborative practises are possibly in need of alteration to better achieve its purpose, which is to ensure the child's wellbeing.

This study has investigated children's experiences and perspectives with interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers, child welfare workers and themselves. Literature from child welfare, education and sociology has been used to study the research topic. Research regarding professionals' social mandate, their professional identity and the issue of symbolic capital (Bourdieu) have been especially helpful. The thesis has used a qualitative methodology and the method of semi-structured interview.

Findings from this project indicate that professionals may have diverse perspectives and assumptions regarding children and the same goes for children towards the adults. As a result, the field of collaboration is strongly influenced by ambiguities and power struggle. When these are not solved they might lead to ineffective collaborative structures. Certain concepts have stronger influence on how the collaborative efforts evolve and the direction it takes towards positive of negative outcomes. For instance, whose perspective is used regarding "the best interest of the child", are one of these.

A thought-proving finding is that instead of combining expertise, it seems that professionals and children sometimes pull the collaboration in diverse directions. Hence the thesis title "Is the choir in tune?" which is based on the image that the members of the collaboration all want to "sing" but do not find a unified tune. This can lead the "song" of finding good measures for the child, into a "song" of errors. One of the reasons for this can be tied to children's social status and position and whether, and how, collaborative members accept children as valuable partners of the collaboration and take them seriously. There seems to be a need for social science to study how public welfare services and education for children may become more unified and decrease the gap between professionals and children.

Acronyms

ACSI - Accelerating Change for Social Inclusion (Organisation)

ADHD – Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

BUFDIR - Barne,- ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet (Child-, youth- and family directorate)

BUP – Barne- og ungdomspsykiatrisk poliklinikk (Child and adolescent psychiatric clinic)

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

CWP – Child Welfare Protective services

DPS – Distriktspsykiatrisks senter (District Psychiatric Center)

LAC – Looked After Child meeting

LFB – Landsforeningen for Barnevern (The National Association for the Child Welfare Service)

LK06 – Kunnskapsløftet (Teaching curriculum)

MPhil – Master of Philosophy

NGO – non-governmental organization

NSD - Norwegian centre for research data

NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology

PPT – Pedagogisk-Psykologisk tjeneste (Educational- psychological services)

SSB – Statistics Norway

UNCRC – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

UN – United Nations

Acknowledgements

Map of Norway

Population: 5 295 619
Children: 1 129 007
Children with Public Care: Close to 56 000
Country: 385 203 km²
Structure: Unitary State with counties and municipalities
Form of Government: Parliamentary Democracy, Constitutional Monarchy, King and Prime Minister.

(SSB – statistics Norway 2019[1]).

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[1] https://www.ssb.no/natur-og-miljo/geodata#SSBs_kartportal_kartssbno

Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis is about children's perspectives and experiences with collaborative practices carried out cross-sectorial between teachers, child welfare workers and children. The idea behind this focus is situated in a concern, as a teacher, that children who receive public care perform worse in school than other pupils (Seeberg, Winsvold and Sverdrup 2013). Because of this phenomenon, the interest of this project turned to exploring the role of interdisciplinary collaboration among professions and the experiences and perspectives children, who receive public care, have about the methods that are used. The hope was to gain knowledge on how cooperating across agencies influences positive development for pupils in public care and identify possible barriers that make this challenging. To research the topic of interdisciplinary collaboration from children's point of view, this thesis first and foremost uses theoretical perspectives from the social studies of children and childhood[2] as an approach to the research questions[3] (James and Prout 2015). This means viewing children as social agents and as bearers of rights (ibid). Included in this perspective is the opinion that children and young people have valuable knowledge regarding this project's research aim. Therefore, asking individuals eighteen and below to participate in this project was deemed useful to gaining valuable information to the study. Regarding methodology, this project is conducted as a qualitative study and has used the semi-structured interview as a method to produce empirical data. I suggest that this thesis is relevant to read for policy makers, educators, social workers, all who work with children and would like to learn more about conducting collaboration with children.

Obtaining a clear vision on what to study for this master thesis, developed over time. It started with an interest, as a teacher, to learn more about children's livelihoods and welfare in a Norwegian context. This was motivated by career options and to fill what I experienced as a knowledge gap regarding children's own views and experiences concerning societal systems. Promoting children's voices was deemed meaningful on a personal level and as an important contribution to increased representation of children in studies, which can incline change as children are likely to have *"interests that stand in relation to their existing social actors"* such as teachers and child welfare workers (Christensen 2002, p. 482). The initial push that directed this project towards focusing on intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaboration was caused by an experience acquired during a temporary teaching job, which is described below.

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[2] From now on referred to as childhood studies
[3] See section on Finding a research question

This experience took place while teaching my undergraduates, and what happened was that at the beginning of class, I discovered an unfamiliar pupil was in the classroom. A stumbling effort to receive information regarding the child while teaching simultaneously was attempted. It turned out that the undergraduate was relocated in foster care. To find this out abruptly by obtaining undisclosed information was uncomfortable and challenging. This was in part due the lack of knowledge of the pupil's academic level and how to treat and act on the sensitive information. However, two week later the child was missing from class and while asking the classmates if they knew why, it was then disclosed that the person had moved away. The whole episode happened without receiving any information on the arrival or departure of the pupil. Upon asking other teachers if they had more knowledge of the situation, they were just as puzzled. Interpreting this experience directed my attention to whether this situation was a result of a system failure. Whose system failure was not possible to identify. It could be placed within the school administration, by not conferring information, or it could be a lack of communication by the child welfare organisation. This triggered me to wonder about the topic of collaboration and whether this episode could have been avoided somehow.

Children in public care

The Norwegian population consist of about 5.2 million people. Children represent about 21% of these (SSB 2018). Increasingly, the child welfare organisation[4] receives letters of concerns regarding children. From 2008 to 2017 the amount of reports increased by 57% (Bufdir 2018[5]). Today the child welfare institution[6] works with and help over 4.5% of the child population in Norway. This means that about 56 000 children received help from the child welfare organisation in 2017 (Bufdir 2018a). In 2015, child welfare cases involving children with immigrant background were more than doubled than cases concerning Norwegians without an immigrant background (Bufdir 2018b). This might be tied to the increased flow of immigrants

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[4] The Child Welfare organisation has the primary responsibility to help children and young people when their families fail to do so, at the right time. They seek to provide safe living conditions, necessary and basic needs such as food, clothes, health, education and care. They also serve as a support organ to strengthen parent's ability to care for their children. The organisation possesses competences and resources to provide help to struggling families. The local child welfare institution evaluates children's living conditions and seek advice from the child welfare at state level. They are responsible for finding options for proper care when this is not possible in the home. The best interest of the child is always to be the outset of the help provided (Ung.no).

[5] Barne,- ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet (2018) (Child-, youth- and family directorate)

[6] Throughout the thesis, the child welfare will be referred to as the child welfare sector, organisation or institution. This is because the child welfare is public owned and run, it is an organisation that follows rules, procedures and aims, and it is an institution because of its ways of working within a specific field that are constantly under development (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/institution , https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/organization)

and refugees especially in the year of 2015 (ibid). Recent statistics also show that the educational sector provided 12% of the reported concerns regarding children in 2016 (ibid). This entails that the school is an important contributor to children's welfare and a collaborative partner to the child welfare sector. However, the child welfare organisation has the primary responsibility for the child's wellbeing and ensure their "best interests" when families do not. The child welfare worker's social mandate states that the "best interest" of the child is defined as taking the outset or approach to what is best for the child (Barnevernloven 1992[7]). A child welfare worker's opinion on what a child needs can be in opposition to the child's parents (Fuglseth and Ekker 1998). However, is it possible that what is best for the child, is in opposition to the child welfare worker's perspectives? The "best interest" of the child is a term that calls for elaboration. This is done further below and in chapter 2.

Many children receive public care while being enrolled in school and experience challenges such as relocation, change of schools, affiliation and lower school progression and/or success later in life than those without having intervention from the child welfare organisation (Seeberg et al. 2013, Clausen and Kristofersen 2008). Because children and youth, who receive public care, are entitled to equal educational possibilities[8], gaining increased knowledge regarding how teachers and child welfare workers collaborate with the child might shed light on how to ensure good schooling. With a theoretical perspective from childhood studies, this can contribute to missing gaps of information on how children would like to be collaborated with or what they value as good collaborative efforts. Since children are the ones that experience their life situation, they have valuable information on how adults can be helpful to improve their lives.

> Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Children are not just passive subjects of social structures and processes (James and Prout 2015 p.7).

The quote above illustrates how childhood studies can contribute to produce knowledge from the perspectives of children that are yet to be explored in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration between the sectors of child welfare and education. I find that there is little, or a lack of research found about the topic of interdisciplinary collaboration with children that includes and represent children's voices in Norwegian context. With an awareness concerning how children are affected by culture, economics, social and political traditions, the research questions were developed with an eagerness to explore societal structures.

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[7] The Child Welfare Act 1992
[8] UNCRC 1989

Norwegian society has traditions of being child-centred by for instance, treating children as individuals with specific interests, rights and needs, and views children as social actors (Hennum 2015). However, treating children as social actors appears more challenging in practice (Angel 2010, Skauge 2010). Children as young as seven, have the right to be conferred with, given participatory opportunities and to be heard concerning their life situation (Barnevernloven 1992, § 6-3, UNCRC 1989, Article 12). However, even though the law supports children's participation, it seems easier said than done according to Christiansen (2012) who argues that challenges in seeing and treating children as actors is eminent. This is not only an issue in the child welfare sector but is a challenge in the educational sector as well (Nordahl 2003). Eide, Rugkåsa and Ylvissaker (2015) introduce that child welfare workers when executing professional care towards children, may meet challenges tied to the concept of "othering". In short, "othering" can cause problems for children because it influences what type of professional care they receive (ibid). Further elaboration of this concepts can be read in chapter 2 and 3.

Upon performing a literature review, it was evident that much focus had been devoted to the topic of cross-sectorial collaboration. However, upon a closer look, few of these had included children's voices. Adults or documents were often the sources for knowledge production regarding the topic of interdisciplinary collaboration, its usefulness and challenges related to it etc. Therefore, an impression evolved that manuals or guidelines that municipalities use to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration is only drizzled with a dash of children's voices. If this is the case, I questioned what adults really know about children's perspectives and experiences with interdisciplinary collaboration. Beazley, Bessell, Ennew and Waterson (2009) concluded "*that academic theory (an adult social product)"* can tend "*to be disconnected from children's lives"* (Beazley et al. 2009, p.369). This was kept in mind while continuing to develop this project.

Finding a research question

When determining the research questions, I was motivated to discover children's thoughts on what it means to collaborate. I pondered about how young people is positioned in such collaborative structures and further, what type of laws, legislation and social mandates regulate and govern the collaboration between pupils, teachers and child welfare workers? How are children's position described in documents that instruct agencies to collaborate? And do children and young people have a say in collaboration with the school and the child welfare organisation?

Being a teacher made it obvious for me that the teacher education does not necessarily provide a knowledge base or skills on how to work across sectors or relate to a budget. Consequently, a knowledge gap in how to ensure pupil's (living in difficult life circumstances) educational success which also affect future possibilities to a great life, was a concern. Placing an attention to the teacher and child welfare worker's social mandates and how realistic it is for the professions to relate to them, became a relevant topic to explore. For instance, teachers may find themselves in situations where other support agencies are required to address the totality of a pupil's needs. Also, teachers have a duty to disclose concerns regarding a child to the child welfare organisation. To some extent this also applies for the child welfare agency, who must use the school as an asset to work with the totality of the child needs, including collaboration and seeking advice and/or information from the school (Barnevernloven 1992). When considering questions to ask, it became important to ponder about which preconditional structures must be present to realize the aim to practice interdisciplinary collaboration and create closer ties between sectors.

The child welfare is an organisation that work with and for children. The word children include everyone in the population that is below eighteen years old (UNCRC 1989). Throughout this thesis, the term children is used when discussing or referring to individuals below eighteen years old. However, at times, terms such as youth and young people may be used. This is because the informants in this project are teenagers making it logic to use such terms. However, since the context is children's welfare and the informants are children in public care called the child welfare organisation, I find the terms children or child most relevant to use. The participants in this project was informed of the student researcher's use of the term child, which was accepted as they also viewed themselves as children in the child welfare system.

After much thinking the research question was constructed as following:

> What experiences and perspectives do children and young people have with collaboration between the school, the child welfare institution and themselves?
> 1 How do children define good and productive collaborative practice and what defines ineffective cooperation?
> 2 What significance and value do interdisciplinary collaboration between the school, child welfare institution and the pupil have for the child?

The detailed research questions' function is to help answer the main research question and serve to sharpen the focus of the project, to explore how young people experience collaboration with

two professions, teachers and child welfare workers, within the frames of being both a pupil and a client of the child welfare system.

Research aim

The overall aim for the project is, as already mentioned, to highlight children's experiences and perspectives with interdisciplinary collaboration between the child welfare organisation, the school and themselves. The participants of the project are children who have experienced neglect and abuse at home, at school and/or in other platforms in life. By asking these children about their experiences with collaboration, the project aims to identify relevant competences necessary for teachers and child welfare workers to have, to be able to productively cooperate with children at risk. The project further explores information concerning what children define as collaboration, how they think it should happen, suitable ways of working together and why cooperation is important to them. In addition, the project intends to explore what already works well and what children think should be improved. In sum, by asking children in public care to participate, the project attempts to explore more about today's interdisciplinary collaborative practises, what works well, what does not work well and possible challenges such as described and found by Baklien (2009), Seeberg et al. (2013), Skauge (2010), Christiansen (2012) and others.

Participants and the Change Factory

The informants in this study consist of seven young individuals, aged sixteen to eighteen years old. All of them contribute to the Change Factory[9], which is an organisation that works to promote children and young people's experiences and perspectives by being "experts" in diverse fields such as education, child welfare and mental health. The Change Factory's purpose is to collect knowledge from children, convey produced knowledge and provide advice and council to politicians and governments (ibid). State, counties and municipalities across Norway, as well as NGOs[10], use the organisation and its experts continually, in their efforts to improve services for children[11] (Trondheim kommune 2017[12]). More information regarding the

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[9] Forandringsfabrikken - https://www.forandringsfabrikken.no/

[10] Non-governmental organisations

[11]   Change Factory 2018a- https://www.forandringsfabrikken.no/article/i-media
Change Factory 2018b
https://www.facebook.com/forandringsfabrikken/photos/a.732822846752228/1165786416789200/?type=1&theater
Change Factory 2018c- https://www.trondheim.kommune.no/globalassets/10-bilder-og-filer/11-politikk-og-planer/planer/temaplaner/psykiskhelseogrusplan.pdf

[12] Trondheim municipality

organisation can be found in chapter 4, including the decision to ask the experts to participate in this project.

The role of children's rights

Throughout the thesis due weight has been given to children's rights (Bell 2008). Since collaboration includes e.g. participation, opportunities to influence, listening skills and working towards a mutual aim, considering rights seemed relevant (Glavin and Erdal 2018). I bore in mind that children's rights would likely play a role in collaborative efforts. This created the question on how children's rights influence collaborative practices and if there are differences in rhetoric and practice. Do the rights function to empower children when working with the two professions? It is clearly stated in Norwegian law and in the UNCRC that children and young people have the right to life and health, schooling and development, care and protection, right to participation and influence (UNCRC 1989, Opplæringsloven 1998[13], Barnevernloven 1992[14]). This prompted me think about how these rights are preserved in the setting of interdisciplinary collaboration. However, I found it difficult to find research that elaborates children's experiences and perspectives on the topic. Therefore, I asked myself, is it possible to make the aims in the UNCRC realistic without involving children's voices? Further elaboration regarding children's rights is to be found in chapter 2.

"Best interest of the child"

Since interdisciplinary collaboration is a mean to ensure the "best interest" of the child, it seemed productive to explore the ambiguity behind this term. Questions regarding who's perspective is used to describe the best interest of the child and its definition, arose. The term can create contradictions and is easily interpreted differently, all depending on who is asked. For instance, as a teacher, attention evolves around the educational progress of the child, while a social worker may focus on good upbringing. The same goes for parents, the child or the football coach (Fuglseth and Ekker 1998, Kjørholt 2010). Therefore, it seemed relevant to consider this concept critically as it plays a role in the social mandates of the teacher and the social worker. How the term affects or influences interdisciplinary collaboration, its structure and the aim of combining expertise to reach common goals, seemed important to consider thoroughly. The concept is further explored in chapter 2.

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[13] The Educational Act
[14] The Child Welfare Act

Interdisciplinary collaboration

"Collaboration" is another word that is ambiguous as it can be defined diversely depending on who uses it and what meaning they place on the word. The topic of interdisciplinary collaboration is explored, explained and problematized in chapter 2, including an account of the structure of the Norwegian governing system, which influences interdisciplinary collaboration on several levels. This is to limit and specify the use of this term in this thesis. By identifying what interdisciplinary collaboration is also served to focus the project and directed the search for relevant literature. Childhood studies became the gateway to see the value of conducting a project that could produce knowledge concerning children's perspectives on the structure, function and value of interdisciplinary collaboration and their experiences with it. It also paved the way to learn more about systemic levels that teachers and child welfare workers abide by and their responsibilities situated in their social mandates.

Expectations

By conducting this project, I hope that it will increase children's representation in research regarding interdisciplinary collaboration, contribute to decrease the gaps that cause ineffective collaboration and promote knowledge on what can be improved. The words of Hønnigstad (1996) as cited in Glavin and Erdal (2018, p.30), rings beautifully "*Every person should be given the possibility to play its instrument to make the music wonderful. The musicians should have common notes and a conductor to collect all the threads"* (translated). The imagery that interdisciplinary collaboration is like an orchestra where everyone should have an opportunity to play their instrument is a powerful description. Being a long-time member in a school band, this picture pierces the heart as it rings true. Neglecting a part of the band could cause great disturbance, wrong rhythm or disrupt the harmony in multiple ways. This made me wonder about what happens if the members of the collaborative team experience difficulties with contributing with their "instrument"?

Representing children's voices

Another stirring reason to study children's experiences and perspectives with collaboration is the notion that policy makers rely and depend on research that includes children as participants to improve services and policies (Grover 2004). Therefore, by permitting children to participate it seemed like a good way to prevent that their voices are not overlooked or made voiceless. Children ought to be assessed as beings with views and have a right to express those views (UNCRC 1998). Stang (2007) argues that if the best interest of the child is to be "a" primary consideration, public and private sector must embrace the perspective of children as right

holders, especially with participatory rights. This includes decisions, proposals, procedures and services that are likely to affect children.

> Listening also opens up to a whole range of visions and hopes related to new practices, learning and assessment within institutions, as well as new ways of living together as human beings. By so doing, listening affects how we conceptualise and envision institutions for young (or older) children, and the relationship of children to these institutions (Clark, Moss and Kjørholt 2005, p 185)

These words motivated my desire to include children in this project. A question that comes to mind is, do "we" want to hear from children and how are "we" listening? Clark et al. (2005) discuss how listening is inscribed in right discourses, constructing children as competent social actors. This opens for images of the child as either vulnerable and dependent or autonomous and competent (ibid). When children are deemed incompetent, this can be used to deny them rights to participate or being listened to (ibid, Fern 2014). In order to listen to children, one must avoid "*placing children in dichotomous constructions of subjectivity as either mature or immature* (Clark et al. 2005, p.176). The embodied expression is also of high importance and vital to understand and recognize children as human beings. Theoretical reflections and critical discussions of listening practices are vital to avoid only skimming the surface of topics such as participation, children's voices, children's perspectives etc (ibid).

Recognitions

It is recognised that steps have been taken at state and municipal level to make it easier to work cross sectorial and lowering the threshold to make cooperative efforts between professions (Andrews, Lindeløv and Gustavsen 2015). Furthermore, it is acknowledged that interdisciplinary collaboration beyond the school and the child welfare institution is important. Other agencies such as BUP[15] and PPT[16] play an immense role on children's welfare and these are not dismissed as support organisations. It is understood that there is an expectation that all the municipal sectors have a responsibility to cooperate in order to provide holistic help to and for children in need.

Structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis provides within chapter 1, a taste of what this project is about. Chapter 2 provides a background context and presents a literature review regarding relevant research and concept definitions. In chapter 3 the theoretical framework and concepts which have been used to interpret the empirical data, are offered. Moving on to chapter 4, the methodology is described. Within this chapter the what, why, how, when, where and who, is

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[15] Barne- og ungdomspsykiatrisk poliklinikk (Child and adolescent psychiatric clinic)
[16] Pedagogisk-Psykologisk tjeneste (Educational- psychological services)

elaborated and their relevance. The following chapters present the results and a discussion followed by the final chapter which offers concluding remarks. The thesis also includes a preface and an appendix where it is possible to find an abstract, reference list and interview guide etc.

Chapter 2 Background

Norway is divided into the levels of state, counties and municipalities. Counties are responsible for ensuring that municipalities carry out their duties and responsibilities at local level given by the state. Several counties and municipalities are now being merged as a national push for improvement (Regjeringen.no 2019a, Regjeringen.no 2019b). This may be a result of research such as Jensen and Backe-Hansen (2010), that emphasise that small municipalities across the country, create a lack of competences due to having few professionals. One of the purposes for the merging is to maintain and sustain the welfare state and provide inhabitants with high quality public services (Regjeringen.no 2019a, Regjeringen.no 2019b). However, access to public services differs between municipalities. Søvig (2009) describe that, *"the UN commission on the Rights of the Child have reoccurring remarks that public services for children vary too much between the municipalities* (p.87-translated). Bigger counties and municipalities are not necessarily better. For instance, a larger child welfare organisation may open for challenges such as distance to clients and other agencies, meeting arrangements and difficulties to make productive interdisciplinary collaboration with other agencies (Andrews et al. 2015). This may influence the quality of help children, in public care, receive. The reasons for diverse practices throughout municipalities may be influenced by several factors. Therefore, this chapter will take a closer look upon these.

Norway[17] is sometimes called a child-centred society and has ratified and embedded the UNCRC into Norwegian law (Clark et al. 2005, Hennum 2015). This took place in 2003 and increasingly, steps are taken to improve the incorporation of the UNCRC (Søvig 2009, Barneombudet 2018, Kjørholt 2010). This has led to children's rights becoming strongly rooted in policies, legislation, social mandates and permeates society. This can be seen in the Child Welfare- and Educational Act (Barnevernloven 1992, Opplæringsloven 1998). Interdisciplinary collaboration is considered to be an important method for securing and sustaining children's welfare and rights (Glavin and Erdal 2018). This has led to both intersectoral and interdepartmental collaboration as well as other types of collaboration (Germundsson 2011). By merging competences, it is generally believed that interdisciplinary collaboration serves to find successful solutions in maintaining children's rights (ibid). How to merge competences and successfully collaborate across sectors is disputed (Baklien 2009) and treating children as

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[17] See Map of Norway for a brief overview of Norwegian demographics

actors can be a challenge (Angel 2010). The last three years, the number of children receiving help from child welfare services has increased with about 1000 each year (SSB 2018a).

Definitions of concepts

The term interdisciplinary collaboration is frequently prescribed various definitions. This can lead to misunderstandings or disagreements (Glavin and Erdal 2018). The concept, as used in this thesis, is defined as a method for cooperation between professions by working across sectors or agencies to reach a common target, aim or solution (Glavin and Erdal 2018). As an "expansion pack" the thesis also includes the definition given by Eriksen and Germeten (2012), stating that *"the enhanced understanding of interdisciplinary collaboration also includes children and young people and their parents as a part of the collaboration towards a shared objective"* (p.31-translated). This means that people within different professions such as teachers or child welfare workers, meet with the child as an expert concerning his or her life, working together by combining their knowledge and understanding as equal partners to improve the welfare of the child through united aims and participation. In addition, D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez and Beaulieu (2005) argue that the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration also includes the sharing of power. There is a need to address the differences between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration and the term collaboration, as people in general do not use a unified definition (Glavin and Erdal 2018). This is done to avoid misunderstandings regarding how these are used in this thesis. Often the term interdisciplinary is used synonymously with multidisciplinary (ibid, Eriksen and Germeten 2012). However, they are not the same. "*Multidisciplinary*" collaboration occurs when people with diverse professions come together to enhance understanding of a problem area by exchanging knowledge situated within their profession (ibid, p.29, Eriksen and Germeten 2012, p.27). The aim is not to use their knowledge to reach a mutual aim but to increase knowledge and understanding (ibid). "*Interdisciplinary*" collaboration is when people of different expertise come together across sectors or agencies to combine their knowledge to reach a shared objective (ibid). This is achieved when seeing a problem from all perspectives by closely cooperating to reach a mutual aim (ibid). When this is done, the synergy helps the participants to gain a comprehensive view that they could not have obtained on their own, leading to a greater achievement (ibid).

People apply the term *collaboration* to all types of cooperation[18]. In this report, collaboration is primarily understood as an interaction, partnership and working together (Glavin and Erdal

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[18] See Eriksen and Germeten 2012, p 25 for more information on diverse definitions of collaboration.

2018, p 27). It is a meeting between people (Eriksen and Germeten 2012). Hence, collaboration is to exchange knowledge, decide on mutual goals or purpose for the cooperation and make equal consolidation for why the collaboration should happen (ibid). This promote a desire to work together that is stronger than what might separate different professions (ibid). Collaboration is the means to simplify proceedings and maintain responsibilities assigned to municipalities and counties (ibid). Collaboration takes place and happens at formal, informal and individual levels and objectives (ibid).

Organisational challenges

In Norway, elementary school is under the jurisdiction of the municipality while secondary school is the responsibility of the county municipal (Utdanning.no 2018, Utdanning.no 2018a). Both school levels abide by the Educational Act and have the same social mandate (Opplæringsloven 1998). The child welfare organisation also has a municipal level and a county municipal level (Bufdir 2010). Having both county and municipal levels involved, entails that collaboration takes place at several levels simultaneously. Additionally, on an individual level in the relational meetings between people, the practice of interdisciplinary collaboration can therefore become complex and messy (Eriksen and Germeten 2012). To make it less messy, efforts have been made to provide manuals and guides to achieve productive interdisciplinary collaboration in practice. For instance, the Bufetat has produced numerous manuals addressing interdisciplinary collaboration (Bufdir 2010, Bufdir 2016). These, like others, strive to include the importance of participation and influential opportunities. They also address issues related to confidentiality, aims, speaking with children, methods for cooperation and reduce the distance between sectors by identifying rights, social mandates, professional competences and resources to increase confidence between professions (ibid).

Interdisciplinary collaboration and participation

To successfully collaborate, the people involved must have a desire to collaborate, see the need for it and be on board with it (Glavin and Erdal 2018). Most interdisciplinary collaborative practice is done through meetings, where people responsible for the welfare of a child come together due to their social mandate and expertise (Hesjedal 2014). A reason for interdisciplinary collaboration is to avoid guessing what individual actors think and what their perspectives and opinions are on how to ensure the welfare of the child (ibid). The appreciation for people's own experiences have also been a reason to include children as an important source of knowledge (Sandbæk 2002). Additionally, the right to be heard as described in Article 12[19],

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[19] UNCRC 1989

entitles children to participate in matters that affect them (Kjørholt 2010). As a method, interdisciplinary collaboration "*must be based on equality, communication and interaction*" (Glavin and Erdal 2018, p.93, translated). However, when reviewing studies outside the Norwegian context about the topic, it reveals that issues of power, control, knowledge and status affect the practise in diverse fields (McCallin 2001). This made me wonder if children feel equal to adults in the setting of interdisciplinary collaboration or if there is a powerplay in work?

Professionals may struggle to pass barriers on how to interpret responses across professions and work in a timely and responsive way with the child to prevent social exclusion (Hesjedal, Iversen, Bye and Hetland 2016). As a result, interdisciplinary collaboration may be given too little focus causing it to be a neglected method (ibid). However, when used, collaborative teams could ensure support for the child at home, in school and during leisure time, leading professionals to an experience of being able to address the totality of the child's needs (ibid). This may "*include solution-focused work, listening to the child, opportunities for successful interactions and ensuring school attendance*" (ibid, p.851).

Interdisciplinary collaboration through teams can create an arena, with the child as a partner, which empowers children by ensuring children's involvement in plans and decision-making (ibid). Empowerment is not something that is handed out, down or given to children by adults, but means that individuals can in fellowship with others, define challenges and find solutions to resolve them (Glavin and Erdal 2018). Children's participatory opportunities are crucial to the improvement of a child's life situation due to adults depending on them for information which means adults must be able to listen to them (Clark et al. 2005). This means that the child should have a say in the planning stages, to the implementation of measures and when these are evaluated (ibid). Article 12 does not emphasise when the child's opinions are to be included in casework (Kjørholt 2010). It is therefore interesting to note that interdisciplinary collaboration may have taken place for quite some time before the child is allowed into the collaborative team to participate (ibid). Also, to be able to participate the child must manage to form their own views and opinions, not necessarily about all sides of a situation, but some (ibid).

Children in care receive help for various reasons. Some children may have experienced child abuse, neglect, trauma or all of the above, in which all of these can cause serious consequences (Thoresen and Hjemdal 2014). However, being in public care may also be a challenge due to instability and regular changes being a feature of out-of-home care (O'Neill 2004). Hence, participation may also be the means to address the instability children experience when entering the system of child welfare (ibid). There is a difference between consulting with children and

genuinely involving children in decision-making. To participate children must be provided with a space where children can take the initiative and then share decisions with adults as equals (Bessell 2011). However, reports show that many children never get this chance (Egelund, Sundell, Løfholm and Kaunitz 2007). Bessell (2011) uses Vis and Thomas's (2009) model of 6 points about participation to make her own three-dimensional definition of participation.

1. A child or young person has sufficient and appropriate information to be able to take part in the decision-making process;
2. A child or young person has the opportunity to express their views freely;
3. The child or young person's view affect the decision. (Bessell 2011, p. 497)

This model about children's participation is in line with article 12 (UNCRC 1989). Children's participation is important to promote the human rights of children and it is of instrumental value and intrinsic value (Bessell 2011). Because Bessell's research is conducted in Australia, her work cannot be automatically transferred to the Norwegian context as the Norwegian welfare system differs from the Australian. However, I find her work informative an applicable when pondering and making reflections about the research topic. Therefore, the following sections below will include some of her findings, that is worth having in mind, to ask good questions regarding interdisciplinary collaborative practises in this part of the world.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is mostly promoted by bureaucratic processes which risks making the child experience a loss of control over their life (Bessell 2011). Ensuring participation is the means to promote the child or young person's dignity and self-worth, facilitate better outcomes for these individuals and produce more responsive policy (ibid). However, as seen in England, there remains a "*gap between the high tide of rhetoric for participation and the low tide of effective delivery of improved services for those most socially excluded*" (Badham 2004, p. 153). I wonder if this is an issue that can be identified in Norway too? The importance of participation is recognised but not always seen or implemented in practice (Bessell 2011). A reason for this may be the influence of age-based power hierarchies which causes tokenistic participation (ibid). For instance, in Norway, the social mandates that the school and child welfare organisation abide by has age-based legislations[20]. Therefore, is it possible that adults might fail to involve children in meaningful participation due to age? If so, this might lead children with feelings of frustration, desperation and exclusion (ibid).

Children themselves greatly appreciate adults who listen and value their views because children seek ways to improve their participatory opportunities, believing that it is the means for a better

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[20] See heading Age in legislation

life and to avoid issues related to participation (ibid). For instance, not being listened to can cause a state of powerlessness, voice-lessness, fear and receiving inadequate information, like the change of a professional, resulting in children having to retell painful experiences (ibid). Due to this finding, the question of whether Norwegian children have similar views and make comparable efforts for participation were raised. Children and young people are not only victims, but also see themselves "*as more than kids-in-care*" who want to have a say on a wide range of social issues, but the child welfare institution is a highly regulated space within which children can have a say (Bessell 2011, p. 499). The school and the child welfare institution are also regulated spaces in Norway, which makes it logical to investigate how this might influence children's participatory opportunities. Children might experience that they are deprived of participatory opportunities, however, adults too may struggle to give space for each other's expertise (Baklien 2009). I am curious to how this might influence collaborative efforts.

Social mandates

Teachers and child welfare workers are governed by social mandates (Barnevernloven 1992, Opplæringsloven 1998). These mandates regulate and influence interdisciplinary collaboration. The school is responsible for preparing pupils for full membership in society, legitimize society's cultural and ideological foundation, ensure social division of labour through educational diplomas/certificates and maintain social order (Olesen 2012). The child welfare organisation is responsible for giving adequate help and care at the right time, ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for development when the family fails to do so (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015). The child welfare sector must collaborate with other public sectors and when this takes place, the child welfare organisation should give counsel and participate in the collaborative organs that are established (Barnevernloven 1992, §3-2).

The school is a central collaborative partner and their cooperation with the child welfare organisation is deemed important regarding children who experience child neglect (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015). LK06[21] manifest the aim of contributing to the pupil's development of social belonging and accomplishment, which is a shared aim with the child welfare sector (ibid p. 224). Teachers must disclose any form of suspicion regarding child neglect as described in the laws to the child welfare organisation (Opplæringsloven 1998, § 15-3, Barnevernloven 1992, §§ 4-10, 4-11, 4-12, 4-24, and 4-29). These involve among others, behavioural issues like self-harming, domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking and child neglect (ibid). In their profession, school employees must be aware about conditions that may lead to needed measures

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[21] Teaching curriculum

from the child welfare services (ibid). The law of confidentiality steps aside under circumstances when the law demands disclosure to the child welfare. This opens for collaboration across sectors (ibid).

Interdisciplinary collaboration presupposes an exchange of information between groups, meaning information flow must take place across professions and agencies (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015). What controls this information flow is the law of confidentiality. Teachers and social workers must labour in accordance with the law on confidentiality (Forvaltningsloven 1967, § 13[22], Barnevernloven 1992, § 6-7). Child welfare workers abide by a stricter regulation than teachers (ibid). This in turn can in certain situations cause *"misunderstandings and disagreements between the child welfare services and its collaborative partners regarding how considerable the exchange of information is to be undertaken"* (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015, p. 217). Though the quote says "partners", it did not seem to include children. Therefore, can the exchange of information cause disagreements with children as well? When a notification of disclosure is sent to the child welfare institution by the school, the child welfare is bound to provide feedback if an investigation has been established and when it has been completed (Barnevernloven, 1992, § 6-7a). Hence, a child welfare worker is limited to how much information can be distributed to the school. Therefore, content of the child welfare worker's assessment is withheld from the school, meaning discoveries, measures taken and further work with the child (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015). This might cause teachers to feel that the child welfare sector is a closed system (Baklien 2009). However, the framework of the law opens for deviation, but must include written consent to have an increased access to the use of information flow (Forvaltningsloven 1967, § 6-7, Barnevernloven 1992, § 13a-1, § 6-7a). The share of information must also be beneficial in advocating the child welfare organisation's duties or when significant danger of life and health is at stake (Bunkholdt and Kvaran 2015). Even though the law is clear, it is possible to make interpretations. The school may especially be vulnerable, because of its rather undefined guidelines concerning interdisciplinary collaboration with the child welfare sector, being not as clear as the Child Welfare Act's guidelines (Hesjedal et al. 2016, Winter 2015).

Budgets

Another structural component is that of budgeting. A budget should be realistic, meaning it must be possible to carry out responsibilities and tasks found in public organisations, such as

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[22] Public Administration Act

the school and the child welfare, within the limits of the budget (Kommuneloven[23] 1992, § 46). Wiborg (2010) argues that the budget in which the child welfare sector abide by is rarely realistic (Wiborg 2010). A reduction of resources may serve to limit employees to act, consequently placing children at risk of not receiving adequate help (ibid). This suggests that interdisciplinary collaboration might be prevented from being used as a method to help children because the budget does not allow it. My impression is that there seems to be a gap between the intentions, rights and professional knowledge on the one hand, and realisation of the intentions on the other. E.g. employees in child welfare organisation have voiced a need for increased staff to the government to better meet the needs of children (VG.no 2019).

"The best interest" of the child

The UNCRC is vivid on children's formal rights. The excerpt below is taken from Article 3.

> In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (UNCRC 1989, Article 3).

Article 3, states that the best interest of the child must be a fundamental consideration when working with children (UNCRC 1989, Barnevernloven 1992, §4-1). Public workers must therefore, when addressing children, always let the "best interest of the child" direct and lead their work (Eriksen and Germeten 2012). The UNCRC (1989) does not explicitly state what this concept includes but emphasizes that adults in different professions must evaluate each individual child's situation. This means that municipal workers should not draw general conclusions based on either "*stereotyping or what research may say is good for all children*" (Eriksen and Germeten 2012, p 46-translated).

The concept "best interest" of the child opens for interpretation which can make the term ambiguous (Kjørholt 2010). The concept may change depending on who is asked (Fuglseth and Ekker 1998). Interdisciplinary collaboration can therefore be a key to find, maintain and ensure the child's needs (ibid). When the social worker and the teacher come together with the child and discuss what is best for the individual child, this may allow all of them to express their views (ibid). In turn this can result in implementing the right measures (ibid). In addition, collaboration will legitimise the decisions made and raise the quality of the choices done revolving the child (ibid). However, as seen in England, young people in public care feel marginalised or even excluded from decision-making processes (Boylan 2005). Therefore, the

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[23] Municipality Act

question is whether interdisciplinary collaboration is used as a key to find the best interest of the child in practice or whether there is a battle over who's perspective is the right one?

Kjørholt (2010) discusses how being heard opens for the outcome that adults might decide that what is best for the child is not to be heard. Hence, when a child is not permitted to participate due to their voice being set aside as a consideration, this risks that they are excluded from participation (ibid). This gives way for adults to use the concept of the best interest of the child as an excuse to not let children participate, because it is easier that way (ibid). If the child is not given participatory opportunities, then the child welfare worker's capability to practice professional care might be tainted by what Eide et al. (2015) calls "othering". This concept consists of taken-for-granted assumptions embodied in the individual worker over what is best for the child. Since the research of Eide et al. (2015) is in the context of children with immigrant background, I find it interesting to consider if there are other ways that "othering" happen beyond immigrant children in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Research in Norway suggests that adults across sectors are not always good at collaborating (Baklien 2009). Several barriers may threaten a productive interdisciplinary collaboration between the school and child welfare sector. For instance, lack of resources can make it difficult to follow-up on specific cases, spend time to collaborate or too strict interpretation regarding confidentiality and/or physical distance between professionals and children may create challenges to the collaboration (ibid). Several of these barriers are created at the systemic level, but there are also barriers that are situated within the actors themselves. These include immediate understandings that lack reflections and are taken-for-granted, as something everybody knows (ibid). E.g. "they are like that and they are like this". These images of reality that the actors act from, without consciousness, are intangible. Meaning they are hard to adjust (Baklien 2009, p. 3). Actors, like teachers also feel that they know too little about the group of children who experience child neglect or abuse and worry that they risk making things worse if taking actions (Glavin and Erdal 2018, Seeberg et al. 2013). This obstacle, however, can be overcome by acquiring such knowledge and by so becoming able to meet children in a wise manner, addressing their individual needs (Nyhus and Avdem 2016).

Barriers tied to trust and distrust is another concern (Baklien 2009). Baklien (2009) disclose that teachers find the child welfare organisation to be a closed system that does too much or too little. Child welfare workers themselves are dissatisfied over a too heavy workload, making it difficult to do enough, which amplifies teachers' perspectives of child welfare workers of not helping (ibid). Child welfare workers also suggest that teachers lack knowledge about what the

child welfare organisation does and that they are too slow to disclose suspicions concerning children, leading to the child's struggle to grow out of proportion and place high expectations to the child welfare organisation to fix it, which might be unrealistic (Baklien 2009). Similar descriptions are found in Backe-Hansen (2009). In sum, there can be several challenges that threatens a productive and effective interdisciplinary collaboration.

Children's rights

The child welfare organisation and the school both have a responsibility to ensure children's fruitful development and prepare them for a full life, meaning active participation in working society and the community (Barnevernloven 1992, Opplæringsloven 1998). The Welfare Act has from July 2018 become a right bearing law (Regjeringen.no 2017, Regjeringen.no 2018). This has been changed to accommodate an increased attention towards children as bearers of rights within public and private sector (ibid). Reports have highlighted that children get to participate too little in the child welfare sector, therefor the law is altered to clarify children's right to participate by giving children adequate information to freely express their views (ibid). Child welfare workers must also present children's views and how these have been considered (ibid). For the first time, legislation has now implemented feelings, like love, to increase children's experience with being received with assurance, love and understanding when being in public care (ibid). However, child welfare workers are both helpers and verifiers which may place an expectation that they act neutral and rational and not to be led by emotions, sympathies or antipathy (Saltnes 2018). However, as argued by Eide et al. (2015), they do not always execute professional care in a neutral manner. So, how will the implementation of love in legislation make a difference? That remains to be seen, however, it is already been criticised and interpreted diversely, for instance the LFB[24] finds the implementation of love as artificial because love is experienced subjectively and is difficult to define (Saltnes 2018). The same article also introduces that the BIA[25] understand love to be about the recognition of children's need to feel love and not that the workers are obliged to feel love, however, it is expected that the change will probably demand an increased focus on building relations (ibid)

One of Bufdir's many focus areas is that diverse professions should increase their knowledge about each other's expertise.

> It is important that all who work in child welfare and in the school, have good knowledge concerning each other's field of expertise, responsibilities and tasks. The child welfare organisation must also, to a higher degree, recognise that children's school performance and school affiliation influence

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[24] Landsforening for Barnevern (National Association for Child Welfare)
[25] Barnevernspedagogene i Akademikerforbundet (Child welfare workers academician association)

living conditions and health in the long term. Teachers must dare to set clear demands and high expectations to children receiving measures from public care" (Bufdir 2016, translated).

Despite this encouragement from the child-, youth- and family directorate[26], some teachers and child welfare workers share an opinion that the opportunities to practice successful interdisciplinary collaboration are not enough (Baklien 2009). Significant research findings show that looked after children does not achieve the same success rate as children outside public care, at school and/or later in life, which can cause great difficulties and cost for the child, families and society (Clausen and Kristofersen 2008, Seeberg et al. 2013, Nyhus and Avdem 2016). One of ten children will at some point during their schooling be in contact with the child welfare organisation (FO 2017[27]). Seeberg et al. (2013) writes:

> Inadequate schooling, poor school performance, low educational level for children and youth in child welfare services have raised great concern for several years both nationally and internationally" (Seeberg et al. 2013, p.3, translated).

As an intervention to this issue, it is suggested a coordination of services around children, such as an improved collaboration between the child welfare organisation and the educational sector (Seeberg et al. 2013). Of significantly importance is *"the aligning of measures at diverse levels, through collaboration between the school, child welfare services and last but not least the children and adolescents"* (ibid p.9-translated). The same research also emphasise how research regarding how children and young people view their own life situation are few and calls for a need to investigate these perspectives more (ibid).

Children's social status and position

The state has for some time been responsible for assuring child-rearing quality and strengthen children's social status and position in society (Grunnloven 1814[28]). Recognizing children as more than a member of a family and as holders of rights, being active in constructing their own lives, has increased the implementation of the valuable information that children possess to promote social change and development (Kjørholt 2010). As mentioned under the section on "the best interest of the child", teachers and child welfare workers may meet challenges in implementing right measures without including the child's participation. There is no age limit for when a child can participate, however, from age seven, the law enforces that children are to be heard when measures affects their lives (Barnevernloven 1992). When children are heard without influential power, it becomes adult's perspectives on "the best interest of the child"

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[26] Bufdir
[27] Fellesorganisasjonen (the union and the professional association for health- and social workers)
[28] The Constitution 1814

when measures are formed (Cossar, Brandon and Jordan 2016). Also, who decides which perspectives should be used in the collaboration and the how and what?

The child welfare organisation and the school are both responsible for carrying out state agendas, but these two long rooted fields may dispute over how to achieve these agendas (Moilanen, Kiili and Alanen 2015). However, children might have their own argued opinions that may differ from the adults. It is seen that "*young people challenge adult authority*" in their attempts to redefine their status, by seeking to improve it and at the same time diminish the power of older people (Mayall 2015, p.18). Because sociology has been adult-centred, regarding adult ontology as complete and children's ontology as incomplete projects during socialisation, adult's relationship to children are influenced by the value they place on the child's body (ibid). Children learn from early on that "*their body makes way or accommodates to the social world they live*" in and must "*submit their body*" to the demands of institutions such as child welfare and the school (Mayall 2015, p.19). In 2018, children are said to have a stronger capability to resist their identification in national policies as socialisation projects as not yet people (being vs becoming) than before (Mayall 2015, Dewey 1938). This resistance is recognised in children's refusal to conform, such as skipping school, refusing to converse in meetings, lying and more. In other words, children may refuse to collaborate as a protest to the social status and position they are given (Mayall 2015). Hence, "*conservations of the social order*" rest on people's acceptance of their social position, status and that social group with which they are in negotiation (ibid, p. 30). When adults use their social status and position as a power to exclude children from the interdisciplinary collaboration, for instance, when the concept of the best interest of the child becomes an excuse to avoid talking and listening to children, measures may be taken by the children to oppose these actions as described by Mayall (2015). It is therefore seen that a child's social status and position will likely influence the course of the collaborative efforts.

Society of diagnoses and taboo topics

In her book, Thorkildsen (2015) gives a special attention to children's rights. However, because of her special position as a politician in Norway, her book is possibly led by distinct agendas. Having this in mind, some of Thorkildsen's presentations were regarded as both interesting and worth including in this chapter. It is "*society's responsibility to have necessary competences to ensure that children and young people are heard no matter the child's age, impairments or language*" (Thorkildsen 2015, p.236-translated). Adults can use explanations such as lack of time, absence of competences and distrust of children's capability to tell the truth, when trying

to avoid speaking to children (ibid). Despite these challenges, children are changing laws and regulations in Norway.

> Thousands of children around in Norway have valuable experiences and thoughts concerning how things could have been done differently and how to make changes…The children stand up, with their head high and the result is that the systems begins to improve. Often children and adults see new sides with each other, which promote greater understanding and mutual respect (Thorkildsen 2015, p. 238 – translated).

According to Thorkildsen (2015), research presents that many children would tell about traumatic experiences if asked, but there seems to be disputes whether to ask children on topics of such serious nature. Violence, sexual abuse, substance abuse and child neglect fall under the category of taboo culture in Norway (ibid, Thoresen and Hjemdal 2014). Because topics such as violence, substance abuse, child neglect and sexual abuse are often shamed in the Norwegian society, they can be challenging to reveal (ibid). Shaming is a reason for why many victims of child neglect may seek to hide their experience. Thorkildsen (2015) writes:

> You don't see it before you believe it…you must believe that such things can happen to children in this safe little country, if we don't believe it, then we won't see it, even if the child stands right in front of us (Thorkildsen 2015, p. 11, translated).

The quote indicates that taboo topics may serve as a hinder in providing children with help, because adults look the other way or find alternative explanations for children's behaviour. In addition, it may also prevent children from wanting to ask for help (ibid). Does not this influence which aims, and premises are set for the collaborative efforts? My thoughts are also directed towards the question of, if adults look the other way, where do they look? Are they looking away to find other explanations regarding the child's behaviour? And does this place the child in danger of experiencing that the problem is them and not their surrounding? I also wonder, how this affects interdisciplinary collaboration? Some of these questions are closely related to the issue of listening to children, which is something Clark et al. (2005) discuss when presenting the topic of adults' desire to listen to children.

Children in BUP[29] may receive individual treatment without ever being talked to about topics such as violence, substance abuse, sexual abuse or child neglect (Regjeringen.no 2010). In the same report it is highlighted that children in need are less likely to be spoken with, and that often employees turn to adults to collaborate (ibid). This issue of whether to include children or not is closely tied to a child's participatory opportunities and when diagnoses becomes the explanation for a child's behaviour, it is more likely that child neglect goes undiscovered or unsolved (Christensen 2014). Diagnoses is a prominent explanation for children's behavioural

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[29] Child and adolescent Psychiatric Clinic

issues and can serve to keep child neglect in the shadows, making adults look down the wrong alley when trying to help children. Idås (2015) writes:

> The problem in this diagnostic calculation is that one often only 'add' what is 'typical ADHD-symptoms' when a diagnose is made and ignore to add into the calculation what should be 'deducted from' of life stressors, such as a terrible life, lack of care, absence of emotional support, parents with substance abuse, violence or sexual abuse, just to mention some. All these elements would naturally cause unrest in a person's soul and mind and in turn challenge the individual's executive functions (Idås 2015, p. 898).

ADHD[30] diagnoses is commonly prescribed in Norway (Folkehelseinstituttet 2016). Research done by Sari, Gokten, Duman, Soylu and Uzun (2016) argues that diagnosing children with ADHD may place children in greater risk, for instance, increased child neglect. Others argue that the symptoms of ADHD may be a result of deprivation of stable and sensitive care and cause long-lasting consequences for children's development (Roskam et al. 2014). Child neglect can be the cause of ADHD symptoms and when these symptoms are seen and explained as behavioural problems, the real issues behind may not be discovered (NOU[31] 2012:5). Diagnoses may create obstacles in providing children help and cause barriers in collaboration with children (Christensen 2014). This is because adults' focus might be misplaced or misdirected due to the cover of diagnoses, which places the child in danger of being stereotyped (ibid, Eriksen and Germeten 2012). Additionally, adults may avoid talking and listening to children because of unchallenged reflections such as, it is not in "the best interest of children" to discuss topics of a serious nature with them (Kjørholt 2010). In sum, prescribing diagnoses to children are not necessarily a negative consequence but might be used as an explanation for children's actions, which may then influence the collaboration badly.

Additional literature review

In a study on cross-agency collaboration within the field of child welfare services, it was found that a precedent for successful collaboration included mutuality, trust, willingness to let go of personal interest for the collective goals and the removal of bias and prejudice towards collaborative partners (Firbank, Breimo and Sandvin 2016). They also discuss that legislation can offer challenges to the function of collaboration, in line with Hesjedal et al. (2016) and Winter (2015). On the topic of asymmetric power, Firbank et al. (2016) indicate that this is not a major concern. However, their report does not include the clients of the child welfare, namely the children themselves who might shed additional light on the topic of power imbalance.

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[30] Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
[31] NOU -Norwegian public inquiries

To play the "game" of interdisciplinary collaboration Firbank et al. (2016) stress the importance of understanding the rules of the "game" which includes elements of fairness and genuine commitment. Children might not be capable of complying with adults "game-rules" due to shorter life experience which make it even more interesting to study their involvement with interdisciplinary collaboration (Olesen 2012).

> CWP services[32] have recently been the subject of media negative attention, one complaint being that collaboration across welfare agencies is often poor. For its part, government has emphasized that the problem is the current municipal-state sharing of responsibilities, which supports joint-work among CWP public agencies rather than across sectors, including private providers. (Firbank et al. 2016, p. 11)

The citation above suggests that despite the school and child welfare organisation's shared responsibility for the well-being of the child, municipal-state shared responsibilities seem to lean towards joint work rather than using or involving other agencies. Therefore, it seems that there is little help in the existence of child welfare authorities in every municipality, which is meant to lowering the threshold for contacting the sector, when it is preferred joint work instead of cross-sectorial (Jensen and Backe-Hansen 2010, Firbank et al. 2016). A possible explanation for the preference of joint work within sectors instead of across sectors can be explained by what is mentioned in earlier parts of this chapter; barriers of prejudice, distrust, time, distance and images of the "others", which concept is found in Baklien (2009). Even merging of municipalities, which is presently taking place, can cause the burial of local knowledge needed for interdisciplinary collaboration (Andrews et al. 2015). Another barrier in collaborating with children is that adults may question children's competences and maturity and they do so for different reasons, such as it is too time consuming, losing control, power imbalances or ignoring the child as worth listening to (Kjørholt 2010, Winswold and Solberg 2010). It seems important that such barriers should be overcome since collaboration with children may raise the quality of decision-making, resulting in improved services coordinated with what children and young people need and desire (ibid). It will also promote protection of children and increased self-esteem (ibid).

Successful collaboration?

Interdisciplinary collaboration can be carried out differently, yet successfully (Nyhus and Avdem 2016). Winsvold (2011) highlight criteria for successful interdisciplinary collaboration. A summary of the key factors follows below which is formed by adult's views.

1. Openness – ability to be open and helpful towards one another by inclusion, proper feedback and right information flow.

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[32] CWP service – Child welfare protective services

2. Respect- comes as a result of point 1. and is essential for recognition of each other's contribution and promote team efforts and sense of community.
3. Attributes– showing trust, willingness, listening skills, humility and communicative skills. These promote respect for different expertise, relations and create common understanding and movement of the process.
4. Closeness – a close collaboration provides much information resulting in a sense of being embraced in a holistic way for both client and employees.
5. Educational courses and common meeting grounds – contribute to increased knowledge for each other's expertise, routines and work tasks.
6. Relations – creating an understanding and feeling of being in a team. By getting to know each other one can remove the view of seeing team partners as "the others"
7. Knowledge – related to law of confidentiality, disclosure and routines around these.
8. Frames – meeting must be governed by formalised and clear frames and methodology to create a productive collaboration. Should be rooted by the management.
9. Children's participation – employees recognizes the usefulness of children's influence and participation. Including the client create safety and ownership in the collaboration which makes it more possible to reach positive results.

Point 1 through 9 is a compilation from pages 103 – 108 (Winsvold 2011, p 103-108)

Because children's thoughts about this list is not implemented it seems interesting to find out if children have similar views. For instance, teachers and child welfare workers have access to pupil- or casefiles and get a chance to create an image of the child before building relations as mentioned in point 6 might. One might wonder what children think of this and if it influences the rapport building? Also, point 7 raises questions in regard to information flow. To what degree do children prefer that information is shared between the school and the child welfare organisation? As argued by Winsvold (2011), interpretation concerning what information is necessary to share can easily create disagreements and distrust.

Age in legislation

Children's views are to be given due weight according to age and maturity (UNCRC 1989). As mentioned, Article 12 does not regulate children's self-determination, meaning that their views may heard, but can be superseded by the principle of the best interest of the child, which goes back to gradually giving self-determining 'power' as children grow and mature (Søvig 2009). The state has lowered the age from 12 to 7 relating to children's involvement in decision making in child welfare organisation in Norway (Barnevernloven 1992). However, some laws have kept a higher age limit such as management of civil processes, which is set to age 15, health legislation to the age of 16 and participatory rights in parent's meetings in the educational sector to the age 12 (Søvig 2009). It is therefore possible to state that "*Norwegian law is quite differentiated with regard to children's self-determination and right of expression*" (Søvig 2009, p.49-translated).

A possible challenge with aged-based laws is that when interdisciplinary collaboration between a child and diverse professions takes place, they do not have a shared experience about

children's capability to make self-determining decisions due to abiding by different age-based laws (ibid). This might also send a mixed message to children about their participatory rights (ibid). Even so, teachers and social workers in a Swedish context, mostly view children at risk similarly and the differences in law may not intervene extensively by creating barriers for collaboration (Germundsson 2011). However, when diverse professions are included in the collaboration challenges may arise (ibid). It is, however, clear that children in public care are too little heard, informed or given participatory opportunities in decision making, resulting in that their needs might not be considered, leading to feelings of powerlessness (Winswold and Solberg 2010). When given influencing and participatory opportunities the opposite is experienced and increases the client's ability to solve adversity due to the discovery of affecting the conditions one live under (ibid).

So far, I have shared some political documents, statistics and academic literature about the substantial field I wanted to study. The next chapter presents a theoretical framework and concepts used to explore the field of interdisciplinary collaboration scientifically. Some of these have already been slightly introduced in the first two chapters.

Chapter 3 Theoretical perspectives

This chapter will offer some theoretical perspectives and concepts in relation to children and childhood, and on the professions involved, their role and professional identity. I will also include some concepts from Bourdieu, who has served as an inspiration and been useful to understand some of the relational processes involved. The perspectives and concepts that are presented have strengthened my ability to study children's experiences and perspectives in relation to the research questions, paved the way to systematically understand the phenomenon which is being studied and justify interpretations done of the empirical data (Gudmundsdottir 1992). A motive was also to be aware of myself as a key instrument, at the same time as reflecting on how education, personal beliefs and/or other ideologies risked biasing and influencing the project (ibid).

Childhood studies

Childhood studies are seen as a social construction which entails that "*childhood is not a natural or universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies*" (James and Prout 2015, p.7, Norozi and Moen 2016). Hence, by exploring children's views and perspectives research can discover new knowledge that can probe for change and promote development within societies (James and James 2012, James, Jenks and Prout 1998). James and Prout (2015) emphasise that "*children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concerns of adults*", hence the motive to turn to children as informants (p.7). Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live (ibid). In other words, children are not merely seen as passive beings who obliviously abide by the structures and processes placed upon them, but they construct their own perspectives regarding these, and their perspectives can enlighten adult's understanding of children and childhood, which in turn can lead to development within society (ibid, James and James 2012). Ethnography is a method within the study of childhood that can provide children and young people with a more direct voice and therefore new and valuable information can be reached (James and Prout 2015). In addition, children get to participate in the production of sociological data. This type of data is often not possible to acquire, for instance through surveys (ibid). Childhood studies not only provide a way of "seeing" children as useful informants but also promote that childhood is a structural component in society where children are not only awaiting to be a part of the adult life phase,

but in need of being fully integrated in society (Qvortrup 2009). In sum, childhood studies involve:

- Childhood is understood as social construction;
- Childhood is a variable of social analysis;
- Children's relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right;
- Children should be seen as active social agents;
- Ethnography is a useful method for the study of childhood;
- Studying children involves an engagement with the process of reconstructing childhood in society (Kehily 2004, p.8).

Professional identity and "the others"

Professional identity develops over time and may begin for the teacher and child welfare worker while acquiring a higher education and continues after employment as a person ascribes what it means to be within a profession (Wiborg 2005). Wiborg (2005) argues that the responsibilities people carry within their profession, shape how people understand who they are professionally (ibid). Therefore, social mandates may influence teachers and child welfare workers professional identity as these disclose responsibilities and more. Even though the school and the child welfare organisation share common grounds in ensuring a positive development for a child, their role and means to do so are very different (Barnevenloven 1992, Opplæringsloven 1998). Professional identity and self-understanding can disclose how professionals view each other, experience each other's professional identity and reveal possible power struggle (Baklien 2009).

Hall (2005) introduces that professionals abide within their own silos and that the height and thickness of these silos will influence how easy it will be to reach and work across sectors. To break down these silos, professionals need opportunities to "*spend time together, to learn and to work together in meaningful ways*" (ibid, p. 194). Only by doing this can experts develop the skill to collaborate and develop a common language between the team members (ibid). If this is done, the members of the collaborative team can develop realistic expectations for the cooperation and set the foundation for each partner to feel that they can contribute to the success and achievement of the aims that are set, providing also a "*sense of personal accomplishment*" (ibid, p. 194). However, the silos can easily become a safe place where professionals retreat if conflicts, stress, fatigue is present or individual dignity and self-esteem is threatened within the frame of interdisciplinary collaboration (ibid). This is because within their own silos, people can feel safe, knows their work frame and receive recognition (ibid). As described in chapter 2, barriers for interdisciplinary collaboration formed at both systemic and individual level may

cause teachers and child welfare workers to seek refuge within their own silo instead of making collaborative efforts (Baklien 2009, Hall 2005).

Another issue when collaborating across sectors is that teachers and child welfare workers have profession-specific roles. Therefore, in order to interact meaningfully with each other and the child, the collaborative members must be familiar with the expertise and functions of the other's roles (Hall 2005). When such knowledge is not present this risk causing "role blurring", meaning that the people involved in the team become confused about each other's responsibilities, causing some to feel underutilised and giving others the feeling of doing everything (ibid). This might be avoided if students during their education were more prepared to communicate with individuals with other professions when beginning their careers (ibid)

The concept "the others" as introduced by Baklien (2009), is about how professions create towards one another imageries of each other's capabilities and trustworthiness. It also includes perspectives inscribed in professionals' views regarding one another (ibid). The term places an attention to knowledge about what "everybody knows" about other people, which are images that are situated in actors immediate and non-reflected perspectives[33] (Baklien 2009). These taken-for-granted understandings that professionals have towards each other shape how they act, without them having a conscious knowledge concerning these (ibid). By investigating the unconscious and unchallenged notions that is found within the concept of 'the others', a framework that conditions change may be discovered, consequently leading to better chances for successful interdisciplinary collaboration (ibid).

Viewing people as "the others" when belonging to a different profession is not only limited to the adults. In the context of working with immigrant children and youth, child welfare workers possess assumptions regarding children's cultural practices from their home country and what is necessary for integration (Eide et al. 2015). Hence, employees' understanding of what it means to be a Norwegian are diverse and taken-for-granted notions within, for instance, child rearing, eating habits, manners and material needs that leads to "othering" (ibid). When common, opposing or diverse notions and perspectives are combined with power situated within the social mandate of the child welfare sector, it influences adults' capability to execute professional care that the children receive (ibid). This may cause difficulties for these children

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[33] Habitus – see Bourdieu

as adults' ability to practice professional care is tainted with what they think it means to be a Norwegian (ibid).

By forwarding knowledge about the experience that actors have regarding one another as collaborative partners, one can better understand the dynamics between the school, the child welfare institution and the child (Baklien 2009). The child, however, is placed in a special position being both a client of the child welfare and the school and being a child as an agent.

> The indispensable counterpart to children's dependency on others to provide them with care, education, health services as well as protection, is children's participation…Without knowing how children experience and define their own situation and what solutions they consider, adults may not be able to make right decisions. Children must not only be seen as vulnerable, but as capable as well – capable actors in their own lives. (Sandberg 2015, p. 246)

Children are dependent on adults and that partly defines childhood, including adults' taken-for-granted use of power and manipulation over children because of ontological differences (Sandbæk 2002). The ideological foundation which support adults' right to exercise power over children is questionable as children are increasingly seen as beings with the right to be heard and to influence processes concerning them (ibid, UNCRC 1989). Listening to children is one of these, but might be demanding to do, as the quote below illustrates.

> Children who live in difficult life situations may challenge adult perspectives regarding how children's life circumstances are to be. It demands an extra effort to be willing to listen to their own perspectives of both issues and resources, because we as adults are shaken concerning our own perspectives of childhood (Sandbæk 2002, p. 30 – translated).

Perceptions concerning reality, precondition interdisciplinary collaboration. As described in chapter 2, trust and distrust influence professional's rhetoric about each other, leading to descriptions like "*that's how they are*" (Baklien 2009, p.4-translated). This is seen when teachers consider the child welfare organisation as secretive or when teachers feel that the child welfare organisation can only help in the most severe cases leading teachers to avoid contacting the organisation, or that their help cause more harm than already identified (ibid). These images of reality that teachers have towards child welfare workers tend to be generalized and spread among colleagues[34] (ibid). The same goes for child welfare workers when they feel that teachers do not understand their social mandate, or when they experience "*that teachers wait too long before disclosing concerns regarding a child*" (ibid, p.12-translated). The images of "the others", which are often strongly rooted, may cause great difficulties to the interdisciplinary collaboration by, for instance, the notion of feeling that the team is controlled by a hierarchy, where the child welfare is at the top (ibid). As discussed above, this might lead to the retreating

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[34] Collective habitus (Winter 2015, p. 193)

into one's personal or professional silo which prevents the collaboration from reaching common aims (Hall 2005).

Karlsen (2002) addresses that teachers need to be better "swimmers". He creates an image of teachers having "to learn how to swim" through slime instead of water to be able to work with children at risk (Karlsen 2002). However, teachers may not desire to swim through slime, but rather that the child welfare did that job, leaving teachers only responsible for the formal education. Letting down their guard and feeling upon their bodies and mind the gravity of children who live with challenging life circumstances, can make teachers feel vulnerable (ibid). By becoming great swimmers, Karlsen (2002) suggests that opportunities within vulnerability can be discovered thus providing teachers with the ability to successfully collaborate with and about children at risk. Allowing vulnerability, however, may be premised on professional identity and whether that includes or excludes it, which is governed by the individual's understanding of one's social mandate as suggested by Wiborg (2005). In sum, Karlsen's (2002) concept of vulnerability is about finding and using opportunities that might at first seem challenging or as too heavy work tasks, hence the term "slime", and turning these into water when acting on vulnerability.

Going back to the concept of "the others", an additional perspective that can be found is that the school is often blamed if it fails to produce democratic citizens, not only by the child welfare, but by politicians and bureaucrats too (Biesta 2015). However, placing the sole responsibility to the school for making or breaking democracy is unrealistic (ibid). On the other hand, the child welfare institution is continuously a victim of a roaring media, attacking and creating a negative image of the organisation. Discourses among adults imply that the child welfare is an organisation that is 'after your kids' (Baklien 2009). This may create a negative impression towards the welfare program and cause fear of those who could help (ibid).

Something to consider is that child welfare workers are responsible for making final decisions upon what is right and wrong in individual cases regarding children in public care (White 2003). To do so, they use a range of formulations. These formulations are a product of social processes, such as the circulation and reproduction of dominant ideas about childhood (White 2003, p.191). This places professionals in the child welfare organisation with a special responsibility of being moral judges (ibid). However, social workers may not always be reflexive, analytic or even systematic in their sense-making activities, and the concept of "the others" might influence this sense-making, because assumptions remain unchallenged and taken-for-granted (ibid, Eide et al. 2015). The school too, does to some degree serve as judges as they regard the child as

their projects and often pursue their projects far into family life (Ericsson and Larsen 1999). Children themselves repeatedly decide upon whether to conform to adults' agendas or to follow personal agendas, which can be in harmony with adults or as they define their social status and position (Alanen, Brooker and Mayall 2015, Mayall 2015). The child as a project and the child as a social actor do not necessarily oppose each other, but the danger happens when children's participation becomes tokenistic meaning that children's perspectives, lifeworld, agendas and strategies are not explored, and the child is made invisible (Bessell 2011).

Christiansen (2012) argues that child welfare workers may have problems with seeing children as actors due to viewing children as vulnerable and in need of being shielded and that they are not competent to understand what is going on. Also, the lack of competences enabling adults to communicate with children is another concern (ibid). Structural and organisational frameworks are often deemed to be non-child friendly and this calls for the need to revaluate considerations done regarding decision-making as caseworkers may fail to include children based on their opinion that children's participation would not influence the outcome of the case (Christiansen 2012). Hence, the way adults construct and organise collaboration with children may indicate how they view children. Professionals seek understanding, and they do so in the *"context of particular frameworks of understanding"* (White 2003, p. 178). In sum, professional identity, the concept of 'the others' and perspectives on childhood and children can cause barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration.

Social status and position

Childhood as a social status involves how any society in any setting views children and how children view themselves (Mayall 2015). It entails to which degree people, in this case children, feel respected, valued and expectations towards their competences, which is often tied to a person's capital[35] (ibid). Throughout history, children have possessed various levels of social status and when adults and children disagree over children's social status, battles for power emerge (Alanen et al. 2015). A person's social position affects a person's social status. For instance, a teacher holds a social position as a professional and with that has a specific position and power due to the teacher's social mandates. A person can have several positions and acquire capital due to their position (Alanen et al. 2015). In the setting of interdisciplinary collaboration, the child's social position or status becomes of interest as it reveals what Bourdieu, according to Mayall (2015), calls the 'game-playing' in the field (Mayall 2015). This is where "*concepts inherent or ascribed to childhood and adulthood are in negotiation and perhaps struggle over*

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[35] See heading Bourdieu

concepts of childhood" (ibid p 14). In the field of interdisciplinary collaboration (like review meetings, follow-up conversations), negotiations take place. These negotiations do not necessarily happen with agents working in harmony, but rather battles over power and how far ascribed characteristics and status are accepted by the player (Mayall 2015). Children as agents may struggle over, produce or reproduce their social status (ibid). This is because all actors in the collaboration bring with them various forms of capital and habitus.

> For us, thinking about children and childhood, their habitus and its interrelatedness with fields, the fact that children grow, in both bodily and competency terms, is an important topic (Mayall 2015, p. 15).

The focus on how children and childhood are viewed is not a recent phenomenon. It has a long tradition throughout human philosophy. In the eighteenth-century perceptions such as children as mini-adults and sinful, tabula rasa meaning blank slates, or as the romantics believed; innocent and pure, in need of guidance and protection, existed (Woodhead and Montgomery 2002). These major western discourses still co-exist today and problematize perceptions related to children and childhood throughout society (ibid, Norozi and Moen 2016). Also, adults and adulthood are under frequent "*change of ethos*"[36] (Bourdieu 1993, p. 152). This means that in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration, adults and children might have different experiences of what it means to be cared for or what a proper education is, hence coming back to the topic of taken-for-granted assumptions and reflections that are internalised remaining possibly unchallenged which can cause stumbling blocks (Baklien 2009, Eide et al. 2015). Winter (2015), argues that the capital of "knowing the child best" challenges participants' social status in the teamwork and causes powerplays where the involved parties strives to influence the doxa[37] to own advantage. In LAC[38] meetings the participants *"trade…via contested knowledge claims about the child"* when they collaborate (Winter 2015, p.192). This is an example of power struggle that can be found within interdisciplinary collaboration. However, as argued by Moilanen et al. (2015), the rules of "the game played" in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration is changing. For instance, due to children's rights as described earlier.

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[36] Class ethos is the system of implicit values which people have internalized from childhood and generates answers to different kind of questions (Bourdieu 1993)

[37] See heading Bourdieu

[38] LAC stands for "Looked after child" and is used as a name for interdisciplinary collaborative meetings in the English child welfare sector (England). More information can be found in the link below
http://survivingsafeguarding.co.uk/looked-after-child-meeting-lac/

Bourdieu

Bourdieu was a researcher who showed great interest in the use of power in society and presented his theory as the means to understand and disclose power (Tangen 2007). In the attempt to grasp the complexities of Bourdieu's theory, I have studied his work and received help from secondary resources referring to and explaining his theory. Though Bourdieu is French and lived from 1930-2002, I consider his work applicable for Norwegian modern society as his concepts seem to have timeless applicability that can be used to understand any social practice. I was therefore inspired to use Bourdieu's concepts to study the processes that are at play when collaboration takes place across sectors. I find that the concepts of capital, habitus, field and doxa are tools serving to provide an increased comprehension of practises within the research topic. The following sections will describe how Bourdieu's theory can be applied and a presentation of his concepts is done.

First and foremost, I place childhood as a social status (Mayall 2015). In the field of interdisciplinary collaboration, the participants have social status and position. Differences in these, between adults and children, may disclose something on the use of power and how social status and position is accepted by the players (ibid). Tangen (2007) present the idea that power can be understood as the ability to control one's own life and affect society. This is created both culturally and symbolically (Bourdieu 2011). As disclosed earlier, teachers and child welfare workers' social mandates prescribe them with power in the shape of laws and legislation to be "managers" of society as mentioned in chapter 2. In other words, the school and the child welfare organisation lead discourses which are tied to what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital (Bourdieu 2011, Tangen 2007). For instance, when a student receives her educational diploma to work as a teacher and starts working, she obtains capital, and this provides power. Bourdieu defines capital as following:

> Accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its 'incorporated', embodied form) which, when appropriated on private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu 2011, p 81).

Bluntly explained, capital forms structures, practices and enables agents or organisations to act. Therefore, to understand how the child or the adult is placed in the social field of interdisciplinary collaboration, Bourdieu's diverse forms of capital can be used to point out actors' position (Olesen 2012). Because a person is prescribed symbolic capital by those surrounding the person, it is therefore granted like a credit (Winter 2015). Symbolic capital entails positive recognition, prestige and honour associated with the acquisition of one or

several types of capital (ibid). As previously touched upon, professionals may battle over the capital of "who knows the child best", leading to power struggle to carry out their contested claims about what the child needs (ibid). However, according to Sayer (2017), Bourdieu argues that the symbolic capital which actors carry, operates *"without 'intentional acts of consciousness'"* (Sayer 2017, p.7). As explained by Sayer (2017), this means that the use of symbolic capital may not be recognized by the dominated as a form of domination. For instance,

> the submission of a woman to an order from a man doesn't come just from the words he uses or from what she understands them to mean, but from the respective habitus they have acquired through their gendered upbringings that already pre-dispose the one to defer, acquiesce, serve and appease and the other to command, lead and expect compliance. Of course, the ways of exerting this power vary with context, including not just the kind of situation but the positioning of the two within the social field, but again they derive more from habituation and a feel for the game acquired through practice than calculation or analytic understanding…One might therefore expect that a woman who had encountered and accepted feminist discourses might nevertheless still find it difficult to override the tendencies of her…Resistance has to be practised repeatedly to change the habitus and become second nature (Sayer 2017, p. 8).

Adults' perceptions about children affect children's level of social status and may create battles over power (Alanen et al. 2015). Since adults are the dominating actors in the field of collaboration their opinions on what is best for the child may be quite different from the child who comes from a different social group[39] (Bourdieu 1993, James, Jenks and Prout 1998, Sayer 2017). To change adults' taken-for-granted notions regarding children, it calls for an *"awakening of consciousness"* (Bourdieu 1990 as cited in Winter 2015, p 210). However, this is not unproblematic as habitus tends to

> …ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information. (Bourdieu 1990, p. 60).

Therefore, as Sayer (2017) writes, resistance must be practiced repeatedly to change habitus. This caught my attention, because when engaging with the data, it was apparent that the informants were repeatedly challenging their adult partner's decisions and opinions.

Capital

As presented by Alanen et al. (2015), Bourdieu introduces three forms of capital that are all made meaningful through symbolic capital when a person enters a field (Alanen et al. 2015). These three are; cultural-, social- and economic capital (ibid). Symbolic capital is *"the positive recognition, prestige and/or honour associated with the acquisition of one or more of the other types of capital"* (Winter 2015, p. 192) and is connected with symbolic power (Alanen et al. 2015). Cultural capital is what a culture emphasises as valuable and for which a non-

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[39] Tribal child, minority child (James, Jenks and Prout 1998)

economically-conditioned market is given (Olesen 2012). Cultural capital can be divided into three divisions;

1. Concrete in form of for instance books, art, music and the symbolic value of residence.
2. Embodied in form of dispositions and habitus.
3. Institutionalised in forms of titles and diplomas. (Olesen 2012, p 125 – translated).

Therefore, cultural capital can be objectified through objects like books, embodied through knowledge and institutionalised through education and titles (Tangen 2007). Because of this, cultural capital can be acquired actively, but often it is done unconsciously (Bourdieu 2011). A person's opportunities and development in life are influenced by their cultural capital and are linked to the body (Olesen 2012). Therefore, as Winter (2015) explains, cultural capital is "*skills, knowledge, behaviour and competences"* that can be used to gain or "*maintain power within a particular field"* (Winter 2015, p. 192).

Social capital refers to social connections, having the right network and power to influence because of membership within that group. These networks of connection can be founded on material or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them (Bourdieu 2011). For instance,

> relations are the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term (Bourdieu 2011, p 87).

They can also be socially instituted by forces such as name, class or of a school (ibid). Economic capital represents wealth and material prosperity such as money, properties and possessions. Economic capital can grow from having cultural capital because of its possibility of providing social capital that offers special opportunities. Also, social capital alone can increase economical capital by re-investing to cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990).

Teachers and child welfare workers might not have as much economic capital as a top leader in an oil company, but they do have social and cultural capital due to having years with lived life experiences that are embodied, educational diplomas, social relations etc. Children have shorter life experience than adults, thus they are likely to have less capital than their adult team players. Even though unequal strengths are present in the field of collaboration, children's ability to use the field to their advantage has, as mentioned earlier, become stronger with time (Winter 2015).

Habitus

Capital is expressed through habitus. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is described by Olesen (2012) to be embodied dispositions, which enables people to orientate themselves in the world they live in. These dispositions are created through the living life and collection of social experiences a person makes, "*sedimented in the form of a practical sense context"* (ibid, p.127).

People therefore use their practical sense unconsciously and that makes people capable of making quick decisions in everyday life (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53). In other words, habitus is;

> taken-for-granted ways of understanding, thinking and doing which is internalised by people through their daily experience acquired through their social position within specific field (Winter 2015, p.192).

Habitus entails that people can do and act without being aware of the reasons behind, hence tying habitus to Baklien (2009) and Eide et al. (2015) concepts of "the others" and "othering" and the taken-for-granted notions behind these terms. Habitus enables agents to act due to resources, hence giving agents a position within the field which is dependent on the type and volume of habitus they possess (Peillon 1998). In return, the position they obtain influences the way agents "play" within the field and the "feel they get for the game" (ibid). However, this does not happen mechanically. Instead the feel for the game creates an infinite number of moves which leads to agents choosing the best possible course of action (ibid). Deciding on these moves is not led by rational calculations of interest, instead as mentioned it is about orientation within the context of general dispositions (Peillon 1998, Olesen 2012). In sum, habitus does not produce practices in interdisciplinary collaboration, but it produces the feel for the game of the field that enables "moves" (Peillon 1998).

By exploring habitus, knowledge concerning why people think, act and do in their professions and daily life can be researched by opening for an outsider perspective to understand an insider experience (Winter 2015). Hence, the concept of habitus can serve as a significant tool to grasp the nature of people's interaction (Peillon 1998). This is because it opens for the investigation of people's autonomy and flexibility due to how they evolve within the field and the resources they have to strategies to steer a course between alternatives (ibid). Bourdieu himself expresses habitus to be;

> defined as a system of dispositions acquired by implicit or explicit learning which functions as a system of generative schemes, generates strategies which can be objectively consistent with the objective interests of their authors without having been expressly designed to that end (Bourdieu 1993, p.76).

It may be difficult to alter habitus because it is unconsciously built into a person. However, when including children in review meetings, children's insight, experiences and views, can alter discourses and therefore change habitus by forcing an awakening of unconsciousness (Winter 2015).

Field

When the law brings teachers, child welfare workers and children into collaboration for the welfare of the child, a social space, meaning a field, is created. Field is described as the social space where habitus unfolds its dispositions and practices and by studying a field, it is possible to discover specific properties that are unique to that field (Bourdieu 1993). Bourdieu's field is described by Olesen (2012) as follows;

> a structure with its own relative logic, a network of objective relations between diverse positions. The positions are defined by power of their existence and those bindings, they enforce upon actors and the institutions, which fill the positions by their immediate and potential placement in relation to the distribution of forms of power and capital (Olesen 2012, p.127 -translated)

Hence, a field is structured by a state of power struggle between the involved participants in the field. For instance, as introduced by Winter (2015), professionals may argue over the capital of knowing the child's needs best. Bourdieu (1993) describes that the field has properties which are the fundamental interests of the field. For instance, a property in the field of collaboration is that all the agents, the child, the educator and the child welfare worker are linked to the field due to its existence, which is the wellbeing of the child.

Every field has a struggle, that of power, which is seen by the newcomer of a field who strives to break *"through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition"* (Bourdieu 1993, p.72). By law and social mandates, the child welfare institution carry the dominant hand in the collaboration due to its responsibility for organising appropriate measures to improve children's life (Barnevernloven 1992). Therefore, the participants in the field do not necessarily share the field's stakes and interest. Peillon (1998) explains Bourdieu's concept of stake to be about "*the relative value of a particular type of capital*" and agent's struggle to ensure the recognition of its value (p. 219). Because interdisciplinary collaboration is constructed by law, the agents involved have not always been prepared to play the game or "*endowed with the habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of immanent laws of the field*" or the stakes (Bourdieu 1993, p72).

Doxa

As established above, the child, the teacher and the child welfare worker may share the fundamental interests of the field. This common sense is called doxa (Olesen 2012). The participants in the field decide what the field is about, but if one or more of the collaborative partners differ in their basic understanding of the doxa, power struggle may arise (ibid). As Olesen (2012) illustrates, the power struggle is seen when people are using doxa as the "game rules" of the field to strengthen the individual actor's position (ibid). Because capital differs

between the adults and the child, it is likely that the child has the weakest position and ability to understand doxa, being the newcomer to the field of collaboration (Bourdieu 1993). Because of this, children's capital may be belittled by teachers and social workers' capital of university diplomas and life experience, serving to reduce the power and value regarding the child's ability to contribute and play the game of the field (Bourdieu 1993). Hence, children are more likely to be controlled by the dominant actor/s of the field. An additional reason for this, lies within the judgement of taste (Bourdieu 1984). As presented under the topic of children's best interest, people may differ in their opinions on what that includes. Having the correct knowledge and understanding of a situation is something that depends on the perspective used (ibid). For instance, a child may express views which are then disregarded by adults as too simplistic and instead, the adults' regard their own knowledge as the correct knowledge due to "seeing the broader picture". In other words, taste can cause "distinction" between people (ibid) In sum, doxa when exercised with habitus, is unspoken knowledge, "game rules" that people accept to play, and habitus conveys the skills or resources to play the game (Olesen 2012).

The next chapter will provide information on the design of thesis, methods, sampling, ethics and techniques used etc. The chapter sets out to explain what I have done and provide information in detail in a manner so that it should be possible to repeat the research if anyone wish to do so (Morse 2006).

Chapter 4 Methodology

I have sought to understand children's experiences and perspectives with interdisciplinary collaboration between the child welfare- and educational sector. This made it logical to use a qualitative research design as the objective was to learn about the topic from children, therefore the research questions determined the methodology and methods used in this master thesis (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). By using a qualitative research design, I interpret knowledge to be constructed between the researcher and the participants (ibid, Hemming 2008). The qualitative research design is also about how people construct social reality (ibid). By using "*professional conversations*" or conversations with a purpose, the importance of meaning and speech becomes crucial for this thesis (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p.2, Hemming 2008). A key element in qualitative methodological principles is to recognize that knowledge production takes place in inter-action amid the researcher and the participants, hence "*interviews are inter-views;"* interrelation betwixt involved parties in the interview, that produces knowledge (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015 p. 343).

> Interview knowledge as something produced, constructed in the interaction of the interviewer and interviewee; relational, arising through concrete human relations; conversational, arrived at through questions, answers and descriptions; contextual, with the meanings more or less tied to specific context; linguistic, carried in the spoken and later written language; narrative, disclosing the storied nature of the lived human world; and pragmatic, ultimately deranging its legitimacy from enabling us to cope with the social world in which we find ourselves (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p. 342).

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) eloquently describes how the research interview is a powerful tool to produce knowledge and a method that contributes to understanding the social world. To produce useful results, I have given a great deal of attention to learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing (ibid). The interviews were done in the fall of 2017. As previously introduced the research questions are as follows:

> What experiences and perspectives do children and young people have with collaboration between the school, the child welfare institution and themselves?
> 3   How do children define good and productive collaborative practice and what defines ineffective cooperation?
> 4   What significance and value do interdisciplinary collaboration between the school, child welfare institution and the pupil have for the child?

The qualitative Interview

The interview is about diving into the world of the interviewee. To achieve this, the interviewer should treat the informants as subjects who act and actively engage in meaning making (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The interviewer must also have an awareness of the discourses, power relations and ideologies that derive "outside" of the participant (ibid). I get back to this later in this chapter. The semi-structured interview is about having a structured conversation

with a purpose and is phenomenological because of its seeking after how people experience and relate to diverse phenomena (ibid, Ennew et al. 2009). Because of this, the semi-structured interview was deemed to be an advantageous method for this project. This is because it opens for a reflexive process where the informants, by sharing their narratives of their experiences and perspectives, help me to identify complexities and nuances within the research topic (ibid). The interview method from an interpretivist view acknowledges that the data collection happens by social interaction. This means that the road to the goal is not only led by the interview with mechanical rules in need to be followed, but also rests on the interviewer's skills and personal judgments in the posing of questions (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015).

The interviews were conducted according to an interview guide that focused on certain themes and included suggested questions to gain rich and thick answers by the informants (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). With some naivety, I first considered the interview to be quite manageable due to having some prior experience with the method. However, after a literature review (ibid, Punch 2002) on the craft of conducting a qualitative research interview, it became more complex. According to Punch (2002), when using the interview, one can get lost in what is studied, how to set the interview stage, designing age appropriate question and fall prey to the use of leading questions, which are topics that I worried about in the planning stages. Using a semi-structured interview pattern contra structured interview, can provide opportunities to dive deeper into participants' replies, give the interviewer a chance to show interest in what is being said and pose questions in any desired order, nevertheless, the themes should be covered (ibid, Ennew et al. 2009). This interviewing style, however, opens for challenges such as how to avoid questions out of context and getting side-tracked (Punch 2002).

Interview guide

Before shaping the interview guide, reflections on earlier experiences with interviewing and why some went better than others, were done. However, these are not comparable experiences to conducting a "research interview". Even so, I found these reflections helpful as they not only made me feel more secure but identified that I had to some degree, practised diverse skills related to crafting a good interview, for instance practising "*sensitive listening*" (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p.75). Using the semi-structured interview was decided early in the project, how to construct it, was however undecided until the making of the interview guide. As the themes and questions were plotted down in the interview guide, it became evident that the function of interview guide had both a *conceptual-* and *narrative* interview focus (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p. 176-181, 184-186). However, after transcribing the interview it was

apparent upon a closer look that the follow up questions sometimes had a *confrontational* interview form (ibid). To illustrate, below are some examples of ways that the interview form varied from conceptual, narrative and confrontational purposes.

> **R:** What does the word collaboration mean to you?
>
> **R:** Could you share the best experience you have had with interdisciplinary collaboration between you, teachers and child welfare workers?
>
> **R:** But, must the teacher or child welfare worker be capable of catching something just by reading feeling…?

In sum, the approaches provided clear definitions, long narratives where meaning could be explored and chances for the interviewees to defend or rethink their answers.

A semi-structured interview should give room for spontaneity (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Therefore, the interview guide was a guide and not a script to be mechanically followed. However, it served to address, for instance, that the informants were eighteen and younger and perhaps in need of age appropriate questions, solving possible pitfalls in research with children and working with interviewer skills to become a good "craftsman" (ibid). Having no prior interview experience with children made me a bit nervous, I therefore wished for the interview to be both standardised and flexible simultaneously, hence the choice of forming a semi – structured interview (ibid). The interview guide was structured to ensure children's rights concerning harm and exploitation, to be helpful on whether the participant had much to say or was reluctant and keep the interviewer on a relevant path concerning what is studied and why (Adler and Adler 2001).

The interview guide included four main themes. These themes focused on child neglect, collaborative practices, barriers for interdisciplinary collaboration and children's perspectives on dream scenario when co-operating with teachers and child welfare workers. Questions to each theme were then created and had different functions. Some had introductory purposes, others were follow-up questions, some were probing questions, direct or indirect questions and specifying questions (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). To my best capabilities, I avoided leading questions so that these would not negatively influence the knowledge production (ibid). During the analysis it was, however, recognised that leading questions had snuck in. These were often identified when posing sporadic follow-up questions in the interview. Hence, the unplanned questions sometimes served as a pitfall rendering data as not useful due to the poor construction of the question. However, the occasional leading question was better to risk, than preventing myself from being able to improvise, follow up on hunches and use my own interviewing style

(ibid). The interview guide was reviewed by the NSD (Norwegian centre for research data) and found to be in accordance with ethical considerations when conducting research with children.

The interview guide was structured for a meeting that would go on for about two hours to produce substantial interview data serving as "*information-rich cases for the study in depth*" (Patton 2002, p. 273). The project's information letter invited children to take part in a two-hour interview. The informants were therefore prepared for a lengthy interview. However, if younger children had participated, the span of the interview would have been revised. A few small activities were included in the interview to function as short breaks, rendering participants a pause from talking, if necessary. These small "assignments" consisted of making a timeline, sentence completions, watching a YouTube video while writing their thoughts, attitude survey, priority lists and criteria for the priority list. The intention was not necessarily to use all of them, but have them as tools to promote additional data, giving the informants a chance to think and write in silence or used as a pause. By changing up the interview with a variety of activities, the intention was to prevent it from becoming boresome and never-ending and ensure interview quality (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, Punch 2002).

Lengthy interviews have been critiqued. It is said that if one knows what to ask for, the posing of the questions and how to ask them, short interviews can be proficient in collecting rich and meaningful data (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p.190). Two-hour long meetings may seem extensive; however, they were over in a heartbeat and I experienced that my time assessment to explore the research topic suited both the interviewees and me. The interview guide also reveals knowledge present and transparency related to the preparations done prior to the interview. In addition, I did not always know what questions to pose prior to the interview but many surfaced during the interviews as topics emerged.

> Many interview studies are not designed once and for all, prior to the actual interviews, for example, as often researchers become wiser along the way, leading to a partial redesign of the project (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p 340).

Before carrying out the interview, the interview guide was tested and tried. This led to changes. Additional changes were also made after meeting informants, such as simplifying language in questions.

Sample selection – access, participants and reflections

The reason for and decision to interview children is influenced by several factors. One, for instance, lies in the theoretical perspectives of childhood studies (James and Prout 2015). Hart

(2008) argues that participation is "*conceptualized as 'empowering', orientated towards the transformation of lives and societies*" (Hart 2008, p 407). Therefore, including children is a way of empowering them. Asking children to be informants is also an answer to the Norwegian child-centred focus which seeks to include children's participatory efforts in influencing developmental change within social structures, laws and politics (Kjørholt 2010). Believing that children have knowledge about interdisciplinary collaboration made it logical to pursue children as participants, which can be called a purposive sampling (Patton 2002, Devers and Frankel 2000). The total amount of children who participated in the project was seven. Two of these were boys/young men and the remaining five were girls/young women. Later, an elaboration on how I encountered them is described. Because children are a vulnerable group of people, I did an assessment within ethics, for instance, related to harms and benefits and an ethical review of the interview guide (Alderson and Morrow 2011). This was to evaluate if it was even possible to invite children to participate.

Gaining access to children in public care can be challenging and I slightly worried that it would not be possible. I searched for the quickest and easiest way to get in contact with children who have experience with being in public care. The thought of reaching out to the child welfare organisation was abandoned due to their strict regulations of confidentiality, possibly making it difficult to pass them as gatekeepers (Barnevernloven 1992, Feldman, Bell and Berger 2003). My own perspective also suggested that turning to the child welfare organisation might be a time-consuming process, making it problematic to carry out the project in time and find a demographic group of participants. This is because of the possible barriers I could meet such as, the individual child welfare workers not having time to aid access, second gatekeepers that of parents/legal guardians who must be addressed if the participants are younger than sixteen years old, or the many phone calls to reach diverse municipalities (Adler and Adler 2001, NSD 2019). Therefore, in the summer of 2017, I contacted the Change Factory whose goal is to teach public institutions a proven way to listen to children in a respectful manner. Their methodology is based on the idea that the people who know most about problematic systems are those within them, making them best at identifying solutions for development (Forandringsfabrikken 2018d).

Learning about the Change Factory gave me an impression that the chances of gaining access might be higher as the organisation is eager to promote children's voices, not only for their own projects, but outsiders too. In 2017, the Change Factory was reviewed as one of Europe's best social entrepreneurs for children who are exploited, by the international organisation

Accelerating Change for Social Inclusion (ACSI). In addition, during the same year they opened a Knowledge Centre, which is the only centre that publishes knowledge from and by children in Europe (Forandringsfabrikken 2019). The organisation calls their participants "experts" as mentioned in chapter 1, and they reside throughout the country, making them a demographic group. Additionally, many of the experts are children who have been/are clients of the child welfare organisation as well as attending school. Choosing to work through the Change Factory was a strategic choice, being deemed as my best and quickest chance of creating a pool of informants.

As hoped, the Change Factory gladly assisted me in reaching this project's target participants. With their helpful assistance, I came in communication with eight young people. This was made possible because the Change Factory passed out information letters, provided by me, that described the project and invited children and young people to participate. Providing information is a step towards gaining informed consent (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The experts who found the project description interesting, sent their contact information to the administrator within the organisation, who then passed it on to me. Voluntary participation is tied to informed consent, and the participants were also informed that they could leave the study whenever (ibid, Alderson 2005). It did not matter where in the country the informants resided; I was prepared to travel, which made it easier to build the pool of informants. During the planning stages when scheduling the interviews, one person withdrew their participation from the project, leaving the pool of participants to seven individuals. The person provided no information concerning the decision to leave the project and I responded by thanking the person for even considering taking part, which would be the ethical choice (Adler 2005).

Prior to participating in this project, several of the informants had also been part of other projects outside the scope of the Change Factory, while some had not. Because this specific group of people desire to participate in projects that strive to promote children's voices, it was exciting to include them in this project. Having a desire is, however, not synonym to being emotional robust or well spoken. The Change Factory themselves say "*We are careful not to select only the most well-behaved and articulate children*" (Forandringsfabrikken 2018d), "*we never pick the children that adults consider to be the most resourceful or the ones that look like they will talk*" (Thorkildsen 2015, p.239 – referring to experts). Because of this, the informants consisted of a varied collection of young people with diverse backgrounds, cultures and personalities, who recruited themselves after reading the project description. Since all the participants were between the years of sixteen and eighteen, their own informed consent

sufficed, which made it easier to carry out the project (NSD 2019, Alderson and Morrow 2011). However, when children are competent to give consent depends on the individual child (Alderson 2005). Therefore, when going through the informed consent sheet with the participant, I made assessments regarding this.

Before the interviews, insight into the participants background, nationality, cultural or religious ideologies was not obtained. The exception was the knowledge that they live in Norway, receive/ed care from the child welfare and attend/ed school. Consequences of this can be evaluated as positive and negative. For instance, two of the informants were not born in Norway and I had not prepared to include a cultural aspect, understood as being raised with different norms and values (Gullestad 1989). The excerpt below demonstrates an attempt to include that these informants might potentially feel differently because of coming from another country.

> **R:** What about adults, did you experience that they talked to you differently because of not being born in Norway?
> **H:** oh, like different than they would talk to my friend?
> **R:** Yes.
> **H:** No. They did not do that, and I am so insanely happy that they did not. It is not like, just because your parents are foreigners, you are to be treated differently. There is no discrimination, because you have a different way of growing up. Because I kind of do not have a different childhood than my friend. I think it is good that it was not considered that my parents were immigrants, because that would mean they cared more about them, my parents, than considering me and my needs. So, in that case, both my school and the child welfare did it right.

If culture, as defined above, had been considered more thoroughly, this could perhaps have provided different insight into collaborative practices and if there are any alterations between children who are immigrants, contra children who are born in Norway, when receiving public care, which topic is discussed by Eide et al. (2015). I find this to be an interesting topic and so does the media coverage when picturing the child welfare institution as kidnappers through the eyes of people from eastern Europe (Sletteholm, Aftenposten 2019). On the positive side, by having little contextual knowledge about the participants, I remain having a position as an outsider and the participants as insiders (Alderson and Morrow 2011). As a result, this may give the informants the status of feeling free to share information since I was only there to investigate my research questions and not there to interrogate them or be a care provider (ibid). The kaleidoscope discussed by Brown and Larson (2002) emphasizes that despite what may seem as a common set of experience and destiny among world's youth, it is by a closer look recognised that youths experience a diversity of experiences and they cannot be treated as the same (Brown and Larson 2002). With this awareness, each new interview started with an open-mindedness and I avoided transferring what worked well with one informant to the next as they

are different individuals. However, valuable experiences were stored and applied if fit for the situation.

I would like to address the fact that the number of informants is few and the potential critique that they represent only one perspective, that of the Change Factory. Because of the research focus and research questions it became logical to focus on information-rich cases, hence the small number of participants (Patton 2002). Additionally, the experts consisted of a varied group of people with diverse relations to the organisation and focus areas. As a result, they were not a unified group representing life experiences from various counties such as North and South Trøndelag[40], Møre and Romsdal, Oslo and Rogaland and different municipalities within. However, I do not disregard that some answers may reflect perspectives shared by children and young people in the Change Factory. It is suggested that the participants in this master thesis represent children and young people in Norway generally. Even so, an attempt to include participants from the LFB was done. This was to further justify the number of participants (Saunders and Townsend 2016). However, after much endeavours through phone calls and emails over a time period, the LFB' administrator told me that there was no one who was available to take part in the project for the time being. I asked my correspondent if there was something about the project that prevented people to attend, but the reply was no, and I was told to try again at a later time, which was not possible for me, as the project had to move on to finish in time.

Interviewing the participants was an exciting experience and without their contribution this project would not have come far. However, though having much information on several levels, for instance, by being experts, listening to the informants does not automatically provide truth. I found it relevant to remember that these participants were eager to advocate children's experiences and perspectives on the research topic and that they had purposely sought out to participate. Thoughtfulness to the possibility that the interviewees speak from a special position was considered. For instance, one of the participants wanted their name to be published in the thesis, which can be interpreted as a sign of the informant's position. However, this was not accommodated due to ethical considerations and my obligation to always protect the informants. The model of Foley as referred to in Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, on viewing informants as "*teachers, reporters and informants*", was helpful to make me more aware of the informants' position (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p. 113). The participants were reviewed as

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[40] Now only recognized as Trøndelag

persons who knew much about the research field, and to some degree, teachers due to my desire to listen to topics they found relevant to bring up, and reporters as I critically listened to their narrative recollections (ibid). Making reflections regarding this topic was the means to ensure that the setting of the data collection was not ignored. By setting I mean the group of informants and my focus on obtaining information rich cases (Patton 2002).

Regarding having four girls and two boys in the sample selection, I did not intend to perform a major gender analysis. However, when studying the interview material, I looked for any special or peculiar differences between the experiences and perspectives of the girls from the boys. There seemed to not be any particular differences between the genders and their experiences with collaboration with adults. They presented similar issues and concerns and praised similar experiences that they felt promoted good collaborative efforts. The only exception I found was that one of the boys seemed to be a little more "laid back" regarding confidentiality, which might have prevented some obstacles in his collaboration.

> P3.
> **E:** Like personally, I'm not so obsessed with that thing about confidentiality. I don't care too much if they said something to others before checking with me. But it is very nice that they at least tell me after it has happened. Anyway, it's not such a crisis.

Carrying out the interview

When the day came for the first interview, feelings of excitement and nervousness were present. I brought copies of the interview guide and the letter of informed consent and confidentiality (Alderson and Morrow 2011). In coordination with the informant, the time and place for the interview was planned and mutually decided upon. Choosing the physical location for the interview was important. The focus was placed on the interviewee feeling comfortable, secure and in an environment that provided opportunities to speak freely and by so doing I hoped to be able to keep their privacy. On a *"mundane level, it is trivial that if an interviewee is uncomfortable in her chair, for example, this can affect her behaviour"* (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p. 120). All the physical locations were decided, except once, by the informants. The exception was that I suggested a place, which was agreed to. This assured the interviewees of being in places they liked and were happy to go to. For instance, one of the interviews were done in a park and since it was fall, I took measures to make the interview a pleasant experience by bringing plenty of blankets and warm drinks in case it would get cold, as getting cold could influence the knowledge production.

By using a professional microphone instead of the cheap built in mic in the recorder, it was easier to accommodate participants' desires for meeting places. This was because background

noise, like cars driving or people talking would be shut out by the mic. Finding such a microphone was strategically done, and a way to avoid having to push the recorder close in the informant's face or having to swop the recorder back and forth to catch our voices, as this could be awkward, making the talking feel unnatural. Making considerations for nonhumans and surroundings as suggested by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), is part of the craftmanship of the interviewer. Also, using a recorder instead of writing down answers made the interviews more time effective, providing a setting for natural conversations so that I could focus on what was said, instead of stressing to write down answers (Boeije 2010). Having recordings meant that I could also re-listen to interviews and pay attention to phonetics, intonations, semantics and more.

Before diving into the interviews, a short time was spent with each participant. This gave me a chance to look for the informant's dialogical patterns which could reveal word traits, manner of speaking, personality, humour and level of security and confidence (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Common grounds such as interests and hobbies were also discovered. Additionally, this was a time to build trust and a chance for the interviewer to adjust the use of language to better fit the informant's manner of speaking, creating a better flow in the conversation (Punch 2002), and be a different kind of adult (Christensen 2004). In sum, this helped building good relations, a time to revisit the project's aims and express genuine excitement to meet with the participant. From my interpretations, taking time to build rapport ensured the interview to become a good experience for myself and the interviewee as nice moments, laughter and food were shared.

Building rapport was not without challenges. For instance, one informant wore a t-shirt which revealed both arms with extreme amounts of self-injury scars, to the degree that normal skin was absent. From earlier experiences, I am more used to people who struggle/ed with self-harming seeking to hide this, however, this participant did not. My immediate reaction was to observe the arms and emotions were stirred within. Quite alerted that the informant must have seen my reaction, I explained that it was difficult to see such eminent signs of self-harm as they must have been painful on several levels. The person received my forwardness positively and ended up having a conversation about it, which served as an ice breaker. Bodies are present when doing interviews. The description above shows how instantly the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee was affected. Mostly the body was a target for observation, deeming whether the informants were feeling comfortable, warm, cold, happy, stressed, unsure, equal to the interviewer, interested, tired, sad and so on (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). For instance, one informant seemed especially nervous.

> Because of this observation, I stopped the recording and said that I wanted to check if it was recording properly. This was an excuse to address my observation. Immediately after the pause "E" sat down more laid back in the chair, drank a soda while talking and had much more eye contact with me.

Considerations related to shyness, nervousness, awkwardness or other emotions, were addressed according to interpretations I made when meeting with the participant. Interpreting, acting and observing is a part of the craftmanship that the interviewer should be able to use to achieve a productive interview (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). It is a part of the interviewer's reflexivity (ibid). Also, I considered my own gestures and language conveyed by bodily expressions (ibid).

After finishing the interviews, I realised that I felt both like a "*miner"* and a "*traveller"* during the interviews, which metaphor is presented by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 57). Prior to the interviews, there was an eager feeling to unravel children's knowledge on the topic of interdisciplinary collaboration. Like a miner unearths valuable metal, I was going to dig into children's first-hand experiences and perspectives and 'unearth' new valuable 'metal' (ibid). However, after the interviews it was evident that the interviewer was just as much a traveller. The researcher was on a journey and the narratives that emerged from the interviews were explored and interpreted, hence both the knowledge collection and knowledge construction (ibid). Some taken-for-granted perspectives regarding children, situated in me was also uncovered. For instance, more than once did informants' replies surprise me because of their complexities. Below is an example of this.

> **A:** I think it is nice, but then again, I am very on that foster kids must learn that even though they have experienced painful things, they are not so fucking pitiful or should be pitied. It only means they have experienced painful things and have extra experiences. Super nice, or stupid. But it does not mean that you should place yourself in the role as a victim (17-year-old participant).

The passage above shows how children can be very independent, active and competent beings, which sometimes might be difficult to remember as there has been traditions with discourses on children saying they are not (Woodhead and Montgomery 2002).

Data Analysis

Engaging with the empirical data happened several times. For instance, during interviews, immediately after the interviews, when transcribing the audio files and when systematically investigating the transcripts. Because of this, phenomenon presented themselves and terms approached which would be linked to theoretical concepts, as I used a bottom-up approach (Bryman 2016). Finding and choosing a theoretical framework was an ongoing process throughout the systematic analysis of the empirical data. This was the means to understand the social world I had investigated and validate the interpretations I had made (Gudmundsdottir

1992). The purpose of the analysis was to identify for instance, links, similarities, trends or gaps (Ennew et al. 2009). I found the interviews to be information-rich, so in order to organise them the method of coding was applied as the preferred way (Patton 2002, Saldana 2013, Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). This interpretive act used for instance, descriptive, in vivo and eclectic coding and from the codes, that derived from both longer and shorter phrases, emerged concepts which were placed or clustered into categories (Saldana 2013, Bryman 2016, Ennew et al. 2009). Connecting categories to theory maintained the research focus and helped me to identify underlining premises, distinguish between important and less important issues, see connections and make sense of the data (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015).

After each interview, notes were written in my field journal. These consisted of observations and interpretations I made along the way. For instance, already after the first interview, the topic of power was remarked. If it was not possible to write in the journal instantly after the interviews, this was done either later that day or the following day to keep the memories accurate. The interview recordings were transcribed after all the interviews were finished. Most of them were about two hours long, hence it was expected to be a time-consuming process. At the beginning of each transcript a summary of my journal notes were added, proceedings on rapport building, the maintaining of good relations, facts about the interviewee and my immediate thoughts about the interview. Revisiting the field journal was to ensure an awareness of the entireness of the fieldwork (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015).

Transcribing was exciting and tedious simultaneously. While listening to my own and the participants voices, I was taken back to specific settings, feelings, memories were refined, and new impressions were made (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). On several occasions, laughter was unavoidable as the same funny moments during the interviews still gave the same reaction. However, it was also a tiresome work as much efforts were made to structure and organise the transcriptions and writing them took some time. Due to having mostly clear acoustic audio quality, a lot of stress was avoided (Desai and Potter 2006). The transcriptions use a verbatim format (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Therefore, diverse dialects are prominent in the transcriptions. Also, emojis, exclamation marks, long pauses and descriptions of the persons bodily expressions were recorded to keep a vivid memory of the participants contributions and how they contributed (ibid). However, excerpts from the transcripts are translated to English, making them a little less verbatim in the thesis.

Regarding ethics in relation to the transcripts and their reliability and validity, the same style of transcribing was used on all the audio files (ibid). Periods and commas were not inserted

strategically to make the data convey favourable answers but placed where it was interpreted for them to belong. Regarding validity, the transcripts are as close to possible objective transformation from the oral to written mode, considering a linguistic analysis such as pauses and tone of voice (ibid). On an ethical level, the subject's confidentiality was protected, parts of informants' interview answers were deleted at the request of the participants and passages in the report were refined, avoiding to present participants as possible of lower intellectual beings (ibid). Throughout the transcription phase the thematic analysis found its way into the analysis, meaning that common themes throughout the interviews were identified (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Coding the transcripts consisted of following up on the themes that had surfaced while engaging with the data. I therefore used two markers of different colours and highlighted everything that dealt with collaboration and power. By doing so, I narrowed my focus when performing my structured investigation of the transcripts. Simultaneously, I performed a constant comparison of the data and had a theoretical sensitivity in focus (Boeije 2010). The coding was sorted into ten documents that became the main interest of investigation. However, the transcripts were revisited on many occasions adding additional discoveries or refinements. This also entailed that theory was revisited as well.

Research ethics

Research ethics have been considered throughout the research process from the project description to the thesis presentation (Alderson and Morrow 2011). Ethics can be placed in the framework of duties, rights and harm-benefit, for instance through protection, confidentiality, privacy and respect (ibid). The forming of the interview guide, the project's information pamphlet and letter of informed consent and confidentiality are based on ethical considerations[41]. E.g. considerations to language and visual aids was implemented (Punch 2002). Additionally, the project was deemed to be in accordance with the Norwegian ethical guidelines for social research[42]. To ensure confidentiality, I made agreements with the participants how their contributions would be used, who would get access to it, how long it would be stored and informed them that identifiable information would be deleted (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The informants also decided upon a letter in the alphabet as a pseudo name when referred to in the thesis (Christensen 2004). Consent was then obtained in writing. The participants were informed that they could stop participating at any time without consequences (ibid).

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[41] See appendix
[42] NSD -Norwegian centre for research data

Upon reviewing harms and benefits, I did not see any immediate risk in conducting the interview with these children. This might have been different were they younger and not actively looking for opportunities to be spokespeople for other children in public care. Even so, an awareness that sensitive topics or difficult memories could sporadically surface during the interview were considered, as the informants have experienced difficult life situations. Some of them have been in public care since birth, others after experiencing sexual abuse, violence, and neglect. Hence, a "back-up" plan to address such situations, if necessary was prepared. These consisted of positive activities and that of being verbally prepared to address it. However, the aim was always to avoid situations where the informant might feel uncomfortable (Alderson and Morrow 2011). During an interview I interpreted the informant became sad. This was due to observing the person's facial expression which suddenly changed from smiling to serious, the tearful eyes and the silence that fell when posing a question. Below is the excerpt describing the incident.

> **R:** Have you ever experienced that either you, the school or the child welfare organisation have disagreed?
> ………(long pause)
> **C:** Can you ask again?
> **R:** Repeats the question.
> **C:** No, I haven't really felt like we have disagreed, but I haven't been able to share as strongly what I think.
> **R:** Was there anything that came to our mind just back there, when you started thinking about something? (giving a look of empathy)
> **C:** Yes. It hit me the time when the child welfare organisation came to take me out of my home and all the unnecessary worry.
> **R:** I saw that your thoughts wandered off. Are you okay?
> **C:** Yes, I am fine (with a little smile)

My field notes include additional observations made, though these are my interpretations. To me, this episode caused an ethical dilemma. The informant indicated to be fine, but my interpretations of her posture indicated otherwise. I first asked if the person wanted to talk about it. When the answer was no, I chose to respect that. Morrow and Richards (1996) argues that;

> Respect needs to become a methodological technique in itself, and researcher need to set aside 'natural' adult tendencies…at the same time, researchers need to be aware that as adults dealing day to day with children, their responsibility as adults to children must be fulfilled and they must ensure that children do not suffer harm at any stage in the research process (Morrow and Richards 1996, p 100).

Though respecting the participant, I had a close eye on the person throughout the rest of the interview. If any similar episodes had surfaced repeatedly, I would have considered ending the interview as it might be too harmful for the participant. Continuing the interview was a way that I could practise respect towards the participant, which is encouraged to be done in diverse

ways (Alderson 2005, Ennew et al. 2009). For instance, one informant wanted something he said to be removed from the transcript and not used in the analysis. This was accommodated. Also, all the participants wanted to read a summary of the results when the analysis was done. Therefore, once finished, I sent a document listing the main results of the thesis. For research to be regarded as ethical, it is necessary to report back to the informants, if they want it (Morrow and Richards 1996). Respecting the participants helped me to maintain good relations. Though there was no need, I sent all the participants some updates on the progress of the project and this was met with happy emojis via text messages.

Regarding benefits, the participants were told what kind of expectations they could have to the project, such as when the report would likely to be finished, what would happen to it and what influence it may provide. Also, the informants could receive a letter of confirmation that they had participated in this project if desired. Moreover, I have used the interview method to promote the freedom of thought and speech at the same time as hoping to represent children's voices on the research topic, which importance is argued by James (2007). This is because children's voices can often be "*neglected, forgotten, suppressed or simply not consulted*" and even if they are consulted their perspectives may be dismissed (ibid, p. 261). (ibid) The project's information letter to the participants mentioned a small reciprocity. The idea of a compensation or a reward was not to persuade children to take part in the project but serve to compensate time and show appreciation (Morrow 2013). A gift card for either the movies or a café visit was offered. The participants treated the compensation differently. Some were quick to gently remind me of the recompense, while others upon receiving it expressed there was no need for it and explicitly stated that their participation was governed by their desire to contribute. Some even forgot it. However, one informant did not accept the gift card and shared that participation was "payment" enough. Reluctant to let the person go empty handed, I suggested that perhaps the informant could receive money to spend on a charity. This was accepted.

As a student researcher I acknowledge that simply talking to children is not enough in giving children's participation a voice in the project. James (2007) write "*...it is about exploring the unique contribution to our understanding of and theorizing about the social world that children's perspectives can provide*" (p. 262). A typical pitfall discussed by both James (2007) and Spyrou (2011) is that of representation. Measures have been taken to explore the participants 'multi-layered' voice during the interviews by asking follow-up questions. This was done because the informants may say one thing as an initial response to a question but

change their voice if further investigated (Spyrou 2011). From a constructionist perspective, this can be expected (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Informants may nuance their views or change them entirely from setting to setting. This is because there is never one singular truth but a collection of reflections and knowledge which are dynamic processes (Thomas and Hodges 2010).

The student as a researcher

Since the student researcher is one of the most important tools for the research, my education, perceptions, values and knowledge should be made know (Gudmundsdottir 1992). Besides having a foot within childhood studies, I have a teacher's degree based on pedagogy and humanistic studies. I have done a few teaching jobs but feel that this experience is too short to make me identify as a teacher. Rather, I am a person with the possibility to work as a teacher. I have repeatedly asked myself what perspectives and assumptions I might have towards children or towards the child welfare- and educational sector. For instance, it was identified that I had the opinion that municipal organisations in general, are hopeless in collaborating and sharing relevant information to each other. Because of this, it was assumed that perhaps the informants would feel the same. Several views, like this one, were identified and addressed in the preparatory stages. As argued by Alderson (2012), social research is messy and dependent on people, hence remaining objective may be difficult. For instance, there were times where I wanted to be a friend or even motherly towards informants during the interviews. This made it difficult to always remain a "friendly researcher" (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Upon hearing narratives during the interviews, it was easy to affirmably nod as to sending the message "I know what you are talking about" or sympathise. However, having an awareness, helped me to continually refine approaches related to the project, striving to remaining reflexive (Spyrou 2011). As a student researcher, I find myself mostly positioned within an 'interpretivist' perspective (Thomas and Hodges 2010).

Considering issues of power became relevant as the participants were young. To help them feel equal to me as an adult, I used time to build rapport, to set ethical values, kept their privacy through confidentiality and established trust and openness (Ennew et al. 2009). I found the dialogue to be the strongest instrument in lessening and removing power differences through humour, words of gratitude, explicitly showing excitement to listen and being humble. I also sought out the informants' word traits and adjusted to them. The aim was not to become a teenager but appeal more to their world (Christensen 2004). In addition, I tried to avoid leading questions during the interview so that the participants could more freely talk, consequently

diminishing the power imbalance between us, as they could steer the conversation to some degree (Ennew et al. 2009). Power is also closely connected to representation (Christensen 2004). I have done my best to conduct this project in accordance with the UNCRC (1989), therefore, when re-representing the data, I have sought to represent children's voices and not my own.

As an outsider due to not being a child in public care nor a pupil, were perceived as an advantage. This is because studying a topic outside of own practice or organisation opens for possibilities such as recognising vital information or issues that insiders may overlook and have better chances for establishing good relations with the participants quickly (Alderson and Morrow 2011). Being an outsider also meant keeping a focus on the child as a social actor and keeping a devotion to what kind of dialogues could be held with children instead of "*examining the authenticity of their voices or their perspectives of the world*" (James 2007, p.269).

The *"body is present in discourse in the form of non-linguistic signs: as olfactory, tactile, gustatory, aural, visual, and many other subtle, nonverbal readings..."* (Ruthrof 2015, p vii). As a person who speaks a lot with my body, this had to be addressed because they carry out meaning and I was afraid that my body language might influence the interview and knowledge production (ibid, Gudmundsdottir 1996). For instance, the informants might misinterpret my subconscious facial expressions or body composure and use these interpretations to adjust what they say next (ibid). At the beginning of each interview, I therefore described to the participants that I express myself often via body language unintentionally. I explained that if they were ever unsure what my gestures meant, that they should freely ask. I then asked if it was fine if I asked the same. In sum, I did my best to be aware of my body in the interviews.

Being inspired by Bourdieu, I use his term on capital to explain by religious background. Having "spiritual" capital as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints[43], I have a set of ideologies deeply rooted in my way of perceiving the world and perspectives regarding society, construction of the family, values, norms and more. Using and including "spiritual" capital would have been an exciting approach. However, religious dogma was left behind. Separating personal faith from influencing academic work was a similar process to identifying traits from the teacher education in the process of becoming reflexive (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015).

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[43] https://www.lds.org/?lang=eng

Reliability and validity

Reliability is closely tied to the trustworthiness of the knowledge production (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Because of this, attention towards reflexive objectivity which entails making considerations to one's contributions as a researcher to the production of knowledge has been considered (ibid). A detailed description of the research process is crucial to maintaining reliability. Therefore, a presentation of the processes that has taken place throughout this project, including interviewing, transcribing, analysing and the report writing has been presented. By doing so, transparency is revealed, for instance, choice of methods, participants and analytical processes (ibid). Additionally, the context in which the research is conducted has been presented in chapter 2, which shows my knowledge base (ibid).

Validity is about using methods that is capable of investigates the intended problem area (ibid). The semi-structured interview has been thoroughly assessed and concluded as a method that could be used to study the research questions. The validity is deemed high as the data produced are relevant for the research questions (ibid). I have attempted to maintain a coherence between the terms found in the analysis and the theoretical concepts when presenting the results, hence achieving validity (Grønmo 2004). I acknowledge the usefulness of applying triangulation to a research whether by investigator triangulation, theory triangulation or methodological triangulation (Denzin 2017). However, even though having few participants, which were chosen for a specific purpose, and having one method, if not counting the small activities that were included, the collection of the empirical data provided information-rich cases to study (Patton 2002). Hence, I consider the overall quality of the research to present validity. This opinion is made from all the considerations I have done to ensure the credibility of the thesis for instance, by attempting to be systematic in most of my choices, my study of the method and crafting of the interview and presenting transparency to avoid unreliability.

The following chapters will present the results, as identified and interpreted from the interview data in relation to the research questions, followed by a discussion. I will first introduce experiences showing how interdisciplinary collaboration worked well and why children value them accordingly.

Chapter 5 – Symmetry - When it works well

This chapter will present findings related to doing symmetry which seemed to cover the practices that worked well in collaborative efforts, from the experiences and perspectives of children. The thesis finds it constructive to first highlight children's positive experiences with interdisciplinary collaboration as it can say something about how to approach and ensure children's welfare and their chances for a better future. The informants share diverse experiences with collaboration. Two of the participants value their experience to be very productive and fruitful for their own welfare from beginning to end, while the remaining contributors describe a varied practice. This could at times make them feel that more challenges arose than were resolved. When exploring the participants' experiences and perspectives, it was identified that everyone had the impression that interdisciplinary collaboration was a helpful method to deal with difficult situations. However, in practice the helpfulness would vary in degree. I consider the findings to be thought-provoking as well as interesting, and I aim to present them by connecting them to theoretical concepts presented in chapter 3 and contextual information from chapter 2. Because this thesis is limited to a certain amount of page numbers, I have decided to place additional examples of empirical data in the appendix, hence further readings can be found there.

Showing care, encouragement and respect

From my analysis of the empirical data it is indicated that care is valued beyond and above adults' academic expertise by children. Care is a term that is broadly explained by the participants and cover many gestures. For instance, the experiences of being seen, respected and encouraged, as well as sensing affection from the adults is prescribed to this concept. The following passages below illustrate this as well as the ones situated in the appendix.

> P1.
> **R:** What is your closest experience with the "best" child welfare worker?
> **L:** That must be the person I have now. I think I like people that pushes me, that are not like "oh poor you", but "stand up, you can do this" type of person. She is very like that and when things happen, she says, "do you know, you can deal with this, one more day, then soon you are rid all of this". She takes the role of a mother. I do not know if she is even aware of it, but she is very much a mother figure.
> **R:** Is love, openness, power to influence and humility important in the collaborative practice?
> **L:** Yes, that is most important because you need all of that to care and without care everything is just superficial.
> **R:** And have you seen this in your own collaboration?
> **L:** I will say there is a lot of love and humility in my collaboration with the child welfare.

> P2.
> **C:** Yes, he made me feel seen.
> **R:** How has that affected you?

C: It makes me look for him in other contexts too, like at school, I look for him in other grownups. He saw me and when he came in, he could have chosen to sit on a chair, but he sat down next to me at the floor. He held his arm around me when I talked about what had happened to me. He saw that I was in pain and he wanted to listen to what had happened. He wanted to know what was going on and listen to you.

P4.
I: He saw the difference between "you do not want to attend class" to "you are sitting here because your friend is having a difficult time". So, I talked to him a lot when he became my contact teacher. When I was lodged at UPA and stuff, I talked to him. It was he that I first told about self-harming. He did not pass information on. He always talked to me. He was the teacher that could take me to a group room or for a trip, just to talk. He has also phoned me after I stopped going to that school. It is that feeling that he really cares and wants to know that you are ok.

The excerpts above and the ones in the appendix, are filled with elements of care, however surfacing diversely. Being involved, working for inclusion, showing love, being a mother figure, supportive, listening, not jumping to conclusions, going beyond work duties, placing children's immediate needs first like the need for comfort, are actions and attributes that children seem to value as the presence of care. Though none of the examples illustrate care in the setting of collaborative meetings with both sectors and the child present simultaneously, I do not find it problematic to use these, as interdisciplinary collaboration is not limited to such situations. This is because the mutual aims that are established and shared, may be followed-up on and worked towards independently by the professionals in the two separating fields of education and child welfare.

When care is present, I identify that children turn to adults for help. This might be because of feeling ensured that adults are caring, trustworthy and willing to listen to them. As presented in the next chapter, when care is lacking, for instance, by not establishing good relations, children feel less inclined to collaborate. Care can serve as an antidote for children to view adults as "the others", which include being persons who are only interested in acting on assumed needs of the child (Eide et al. 2015, Baklien 2009). The interview data introduces adults' attempts to build relations, respect and recognition over the child's experiences and attributes, by for instance, using listening skills, which Winsvold (2011) argues to be a crucial effort to have fruitful collaborative achievements. The excerpt below shows that when good relations is not an issue, children may speak more freely with adults, which may then lead to, as Winsvold (2011) indicate, productive collaboration.

P3.
E: There are those that you relate to a lot more. Then it is like speaking with a buddy. This makes it easier to talk and you can communicate from the heart. You don't place a filter on your voice to be politically correct.

In passage P3, it seems like the participant, after experiencing the building of relations, stops speaking in a manner that he believes adults prefer to be spoken with and rather communicate more freely from the heart. This can be understood as contributing to productive collaboration by reducing the barrier of negative images that children might towards adults about who they are and encourage a foundation for good relations. The empirical data presented prior to excerpt P3, also show that children make assessments on whether adults sincerely care or not. They base this on adults' willingness to provide options where they can thrive, which at times go beyond the scope of social mandates, keeping information, being heard, how adults talk with them, such as using body language by placing an arm around the child, believing in the child which is shown through motivational speech by the adult, being humble, open and not pitying the child. By observing adults, the participant show how they are active in constructing their own lives (James and Prout 2015). It seems that children desire protection, love and affection from their adult collaborative partners. However, it looks like if adults are to gain access to children's perspectives, they must first show care before children are willing to share their views, experiences or valuable information.

When care is present, adults can become individuals who serve as "significant others" for children (Haller and Woelfel 1972). This means that they become persons that are very important to the child, their well-being and who greatly influence children's beliefs about themselves (ibid). It also includes that adults serve as figures of reliance that children can trust. This is seen, for instance, in excerpt P4. I suggest that trust must be established between collaborative partners for there to be an effective teamwork. This is because trust promotes openness, and encourages the building of relations, which is also seen in the data (Baklien 2009, Winsvold 2011). As a result of trust, the chances for implementing good mutual aims for the welfare of the child is increased, due to the child's desire to let adults in on their life experience and the feeling of being able to speak freely. Hence, guessing the needs of the child is avoided (Hesjedal 2014). When implementing care and affection, adults can become people who use their symbolic capital to contribute to children's welfare (Bourdieu 1993). By this I mean that children, when sensing care, might easier rely on adults' expertise. As seen in the next chapter, when care is lacking, children experiences that adults use their symbolic capital to run the field of collaboration to their own advantage, possibly causing a state of power struggle between the members of the collaboration that may result in inequality[44].

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[44] See chapter 6

In sum, the finding above is about role models and the experience of receiving recognition, and care. These elements are closely tied to children's experience of being taken seriously (James and Prout 2015). The topic of being taken seriously is entangled with children's rights (Alanen 2010). The excerpts above reveal ways that the UNCRC and legislation are in play in the relations that take place between adults and children, where being heard is one of them. On another note, my finding also underlines that speaking to children about difficult topics can have a positive effect on the collaboration. This is in line with Kjørholt (2010) who indicates that avoiding talking to children may raise barriers to collaboration, resulting in failure to meet children's needs. Adults' ability to take children seriously may depend on their perspectives on children and their competences. This is a topic that is visited in the next chapter as I explore people's taken-for-granted assumptions and reflections. When children experience that they are taken seriously, it is possible to interpret this as promoting positive collaborative experiences, resulting in increased chances of resolving difficult situations in children's lives

Confidentiality and trust

When analysing the empirical data, I found that children are concerned about adults' use of confidentiality and that too often information is shared without the children's knowledge or consent. However, the informants who experience being informed and consulted with before information is passed on, shares that this ensures confidentiality and representation which seems to make it easier to trust adults.

> P1.
> **R:** What role has the law on confidentiality?
> **L:** I think it is very important because there are some things that I trust my institution to say, and something I trust my school to say. So, if there are things that happen at school that I do not want the school to know, I can trust the child welfare and that is so nice. To know that they will not just tell the school about it in a meeting.

> P3.
> **R:** Have you experienced that the child welfare are good at inquiring with you before a meeting?
> **E:** Yes. They often go through a list with me, and then they receive direct and concrete answers from me. Then they write down what is said by me and talk to the next person about that, what I said. She does not rephrase what was said.

These two passages demonstrate how confidentiality can be used by adults to preserve information, regulate who gets to know what, build relationships based on trust and ensure children's voices through representation. I interpret that the adults, in the passages above, construct children as competent social actors (Kehily 2004). I make this identification due to their listening skills and seeking after children's voices which is recognised by Clark et al. (2005) as the means to treat children as competent. Deeming children as competent beings opens for participatory opportunities (ibid). This is seen by how the informants are provided

with chances to influence information flow. In addition, it seems like the participants feel that they can rely on legislation regarding confidentiality, and because of this can confide in adults. Like Bessell (2011) argues, this thesis also recognises that children value adults who listen to their views and who seek to provide participatory opportunities. On an intergenerational level, I analyse that it does not look like there is a battle for social status and position or disputes over who knows the child best (Mayall 2015, Winter 2015). This may lead to trust, not just between individuals but to the professional sectors as well. Being able to trust one another may promote respect between the collaborative members. Mutual respect seems to have a tendency to promote that children feel safe and that their rights for protection is kept due to adults' awareness of information sharing as well as the rights to be informed and to be heard, as described throughout the UNCRC (1989).

It also looks like the informants trust the "silos" that the adults abide by (Hall 2005). For instance, in passage P1, the participant emphasises the importance of being able to convey information to the two organisations. It is also highlighted that being able to rely on adults that they do not share information across the borders of their sectors is vital. The participant, perhaps unknowingly, use the social mandates and legislations that the professionals abide by to control the information flow. By being treated as active social agents, the informants seem to reduce the perspective of the adults as the "others (Baklien 2009). This might be because they form positive images of the adults. Consequently, this may build a collaborative foundation for openness and experiences of working together in meaningful ways. As Hall (2005) argues, this sets the standards for realistic expectations for the cooperation and it gives the participants the feeling of contributing to reaching shared aims. I interpret that this finding shows that confidentiality is kept and that adults sincerely ask children for their views. My finding also suggests that the adults are not practicing "othering" of the children by for instance, letting an argument about 'the best interest of the child' serve as a gateway to ignore children's voices (Kjørholt 2010), through taken-for-granted notions that adults already know the child's views or needs (Eide et al. 2015, Baklien 2009).

Being informed – having a say

The following finding is about conveying information to children. Interdisciplinary collaboration may work well if children are informed about ideas or plans made for the child by the adults, why they are formed and the aims that are pursued. However, being informed without opportunity to influence causes barriers for collaboration[45]. The excerpts below and in

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[45] Go to chapter 6.

the appendix, focus on the topic of information, the importance of getting to express views about strategies that are formed and chances to influence these, for instance, through alternations. The thesis finds that being informed may promote children to experience that they are treated as partners in the collaborative team, encourage equality, dignity, self-worth and facilitate good outcomes for children.

> P1.
> **R:** In what ways do you experience that the teacher and child welfare worker treat you like a partner in the cooperation?
> **L:** Very often they tell me their idea and ask, "what do you think about that, do you want to change anything and what about this and this?". Then they explain why they made this plan and that it is to help on this and this struggle.
> **R:** Could you share an experience with collaboration between you, the school and the child welfare?
> **C:** Last year when I was in second grade, a lot of things happened in my life. I was not going to be able to complete my year. But, because there was so much collaboration between me, the school and my institution, and we all talked with each other and informed one another, I was able to complete my year.
>
> P3.
> **R:** In what ways do you experience that the teacher and child welfare worker treat you like a partner in the cooperation?
> **E:** They greatly appreciate my opinions. They care about my views and they want to hear them instead of just saying their own opinions. I think those meetings would not have gone too well had I not been open about mostly everything and told my opinions all the time. Then things would have been much more difficult. They also did not use their own words to decide things. They used my words which made it easier, because then my words were added like I wanted them to be applied.

The passages include several interesting topics such as the showing of appreciation, gratitude, approval, being informed and setting aims. I would like to focus on the issue of sharing information. Article 13 in the UNCRC (1989) clearly states that the child has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes seeking, receiving and impart information and ideas of all kinds. The empirical data show how children may seek, receive and impart information. For instance, P1 describes that the adult partners provided information about ideas and the purpose of it (note that the informant says, "*very often*", indicating that sometimes adults do not provide information). Because of this she experiences being treated as a partner. Also, because of information sharing, the opportunity to graduate second grade of upper secondary school became possible. Hence, information flow can serve to protect children, in this case from failure to progress educationally. This led to the 'best interest of the child' being achieved, seen from the child's perspective.

The second excerpt P3, addresses the importance of communicating information. Here the informant shares the idea that collaborative meetings would have become challenging if he had not been open and willing to share information through his views. It is also indicated that a motivation to impart information is predicated on the usage of that information. Participant in

P3 describes that by sharing his opinions they were applied by the adults when making decisions, giving him the experience of influencing decisions. Additionally, the informant highlights how his words were applied as he preferred them to. Hence, imparting information may be tied to that of representation. As argued by Christensen (2004), power is closely connected to representation and in this case, I interpret that it helps the child to feel equal to his partners. It may seem as if imparting information, provide children with a stronger position within the field of collaboration and create opportunities to use the field to own advantage. Passage P3 does not show any indication of a power struggle, which can possibly be explained by how the information, provided by participant, is received by the others. Had his views not been heard, influenced outcomes or been represented as he wanted, perhaps the informant may have engaged in a power struggle to strengthen his position, which is a course of action that Olesen (2012) suggests may happen. I will come back to the issue of power struggle in chapter 6. There are also no signs of the adults using their capital, meaning for instance, their professional identity or competences as teachers and child welfare worker, to belittle the informant's capital of insight about own life experience. Therefore, it seems like the child, as a newcomer to the field of collaboration, is valued by the adults and not dismissed due to having e.g. less life experience (Bourdieu 1993). I argue that this can be a reason for why the informant is willing to share information in the collaborative team. Another cause can be that he experiences that the stakes are not too high as described by Backe-Hansen (2016), which inclines the child to participate. The same participant also explicitly shared the experience of having equality in the cooperative team.

> P3.
> **E:** There was no hierarchy in my collaboration and that was very comfortable. We were all equals.

This reinforces my interpretation that a child's opportunity to freedom of expression through seeking, receiving and imparting information, highly influences a child's experience of being a collaborative partner. The way adults treat children's freedom of expression can serve to diminish issues related to power and promote equality which again may lead to a fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration. I therefore interpret that equality, which is a human right, may serve as the means to prevent obstacles in improving children's difficult life circumstances. When equality is experienced as a synonym to being heard, participation, respect, balanced use of power and influential opportunities, it may strongly benefit the interdisciplinary collaboration. I argue this because transparency can be increased regarding decision-making and promote better understanding regarding measures. It also seems like children will more

likely remain ownership of their lives, which can help children feel safe and that they can contribute to decisions about their lives. This thesis finds reason to suggest that equality is essential to a positive collaborative team effort, not only for children but for the whole team.

Excerpt P7 which is found in the appendix, illustrates how children may seek information. They do so when striving to control the information flow. For instance, as described in P7 the informant highlights that children want to know what information is being transferred between the teacher and the child welfare worker. All the participants strongly emphasise that adults cannot and should not hand over information about the child to other adults without informing the child first. This is to provide the child with a chance to influence the information flow and talk with the adult about how it can be done in as safe way for the child. The excerpt below is about the importance of informing the child before sharing information. In this passage, the participant explains that adults must inform the child when their duty to disclose surpasses the child's desire for confidentiality and explains why. When this is done, the child's trust may be intact and pave the way for the information flow to happen and ensure the child's safety.

> P6.
> **R:** The purpose of the duty to disclose suspicion of child neglect has been implemented so that the law of confidentiality can be surpassed creating opportunities to work across sectors. What do you think about the duty to disclose?
> **E:** I think many times it is an obstacle. If I tell you something super-secret and you promise to keep it so, and then you just go ahead and call the child welfare organisation, then I lose my trust in you. One must explain to the child that this is something I cannot keep for myself and ask, "How can I share this so that it safe for you?"

When analysing all the presented excerpts, it seems like children have a strong desire to participate. Therefore, being informed about which information goes where and to whom is not just about wanting to give their consent, but about feeling safe, to influence how it is done and ensure participation. I find this to demonstrate children as competent beings. By having the opportunity to impart information, children may increase their representation and influence the collaboration (Backe-Hansen 2016). For instance, as seen in excerpt P7, the child would like to be a part of determining what information teachers should get access to in order to help and better facilitate their school hours. Therefore, it seems like children actively seek ways to improve their lives and that being informed influences this. When reviewing that children in public care perform worse in school than other pupils (Seeberg et al. 2013), this finding is interesting. This is because interdisciplinary collaboration has been deemed a method to tackle the issue of children in public care's success rate in school (ibid). However, my finding indicates that though the method is good, it may not be productive if children are not informed,

as this may prevent them from contributing to finding good measures. This is a topic that will be discussed in the next chapter, which includes interpretations adults do without conversing with children first.

According to the finding on the topic of information, it is also interpreted that how information is dealt with may provide children with the opportunity to freedom and expression which can serve as a key to ensure the best interest of the child, leading to the implementation of measures that the child is also happy with (Fugleseth and Ekker 1998). Sandberg (2015) argues that adults must consider children's experiences and the way they define their own situations and which solutions they consider. Otherwise adults may not be able to make right decisions (ibid). As the finding indicates, the children who experience being taken seriously and have a freedom of speech are likely to be happy with the collaborative efforts. Hence, my finding is in line with Sandberg (2015), that when considering children's experiences, perspectives and solutions that are worth trying, adults can facilitate right decisions promoting productive interdisciplinary collaboration.

Collaborating with children - being treated as humans - avoiding stigma

The following findings presented in the sections below will share somewhat on the topic of working with children and not with cases. This is a term I get back to in chapter 6. In this chapter I will concentrate on the positive opposite to the term, which is about having a collaboration where the team players are treated as humans. The analysis discloses that children are not fond of feeling or being treated as cases and wants to be seen and dealt with in ways that they consider to be humane. Treating children as people and not cases is a topic that surface diversely throughout the different interviews. One example is a comment such as the one below.

> P1.
> **R:** Love is repeated, what is love to you?
> **L:** Love is that you treat me like a child and not a case.

Often, the informants describe practises where concern, love and affection are implemented in the collaboration. These seem to function as building blocks, preventing the distancing of children to cases. I argue that my findings below indicate that when children do not feel like cases, it increases their chances of trusting adults, experiencing being valued and gain positive outcomes from the collaboration. I now move on to presenting diverse positive experiences that informants have had and linking them theory. The citation below describes a teacher that focus on building relations and class management, which importance is discussed by Aasen, Nordahl, Mælan, Drugli and Myhr (2014).

> P7.

R: What is a jackpot teacher?
A: She would send messages like, "I missed you today, why don't you come tomorrow so we can talk about what is going on. I really want you here". She would also say stuff like that out loud in class too if someone was missing, that we should send a message to the pupil. She would say, "We are a community and we will be so for a whole year. We need to encourage each other". She would explain the importance of that. And if you told her horrible stories, you always got a scheduled meeting with the adults at the school before she took it to the child welfare. Because she knew how dangerous that could be.

The participant in <u>P7</u> uses the teacher as a role model for how all teachers should be and emphasise that the teacher's effort to make each pupil feel seen, is a way to building good relations. I identify that the teacher utilized the class as a community to care for each other to extend her visions to the pupils, making caring a mutual goal. This is a perfect example of relations between teacher and pupils as a social art and not of academic art (Drugli 2012). In addition, the described teacher seems to have grasped the opportunities that lies within vulnerability because of how she "goes the extra mile" by sending text messages, getting personally involved and sharing the responsibility of caring with the class (Karlsen 2002). In other words, she "swims" through slime by getting involved more than the work mandate requires of her and turns it into opportunities, for instance that of inclusion and creating a community. Therefore, the teacher seems to have understood that to seize certain opportunities, demands that one becomes vulnerable. However, Karlsen (2002), argues that becoming vulnerable does not mean that one risks negative consequences, like exhaustion, but makes you a better swimmer providing increased abilities to work with children at risk. This might also be the reason for why the participant calls this teacher a jackpot teacher. Below is another example of a teacher who has learned to swim through "slime".

<u>P4</u>
I: I had this teacher in second grade…who noticed that something was off. Therefore, he took me out of class to talk but he did this with everyone, so it didn't look like something was wrong. However, he spoke longer with me. But no one noticed. He dug and dug about how things were at home. In the beginning I said nothing. So, he continued for a long time repeatedly talking to pupils until I started talking. He did this in a good way at least up until I spoke.

In this excerpt we meet a persistent teacher who took upon him the mission to find the cause behind his suspicion, that something was wrong in the pupil's life, which he after many attempts succeeded to confirm. The term vulnerability as presented by Karlsen (2002), is about seeking possibilities that lies within the state of becoming vulnerable. For instance, the persistent teacher did not have to keep investigating his suspicion after several attempts to disclose whether the child was at risk or not. He could have looked for an easy exit by finding another explanation for his concern. However, he kept on investigating by repeating to have one on one conversations with his pupils. By taking several pupils out of class, it can be understood that

the teacher attempted to protect the child he had singled. For instance, from peers who might make inquiries as to why she must talk to the teacher repeatedly. I interpret that this teacher went out of his ways to perform his investigation due to being persistent and working in disguise. This entails extra work, possibly worry about the child or stress, meaning that the teacher by becoming vulnerable was able to identify a child at risk. But, as seen in the excerpt, the child felt that the teacher did a good job until his duty to disclose became the next step. It is also at this point that collaboration often meets barriers due to information starting to flow outside the control of the child and trust is broken. This is discussed in chapter 6. However, the result of using vulnerability in this excerpt, led to the discovery of a child at risk and, as such, in acute need of help. In sum, the child's adult collaborative partners may all benefit from considering the possibilities within vulnerability as it seems to be a method to get through to children if they find it difficult to share their thoughts. Hence, opportunities within vulnerability can ensure participation.

Going back to excerpt on the jackpot teacher in P7, this passage also highlights something else that is interesting and can be tied to that of building relations. The informant shares the idea that the teacher knows how dangerous it could be to provide information to the child welfare organisation before speaking with the child. One way this can be understood is that Baklien's (2009) concept of "the others", which includes lack of trust, rumours, discourses or experiences with one another, does not only cause barriers to collaboration but can also serve to ensure participation for the child. In the excerpt, the teacher possesses, from the perspective of the child, the perspective that one must assess the situation in dialogue with the child, which build relations, before letting information go across the borders of the educational sector. This is because contacting the child welfare organisation is considered as becoming possible dangerous for the child. The teacher's negative image of the child welfare worker may therefore have ensured the child's participation due to the dialogue, before sharing information to the child welfare organisation. However, if teachers feel that there is a reason to shield children from the child welfare organisation, this might influence the children's perspectives of the organisation, strengthening their views of the child welfare worker as the "other". I interpret that, though the teacher views the informant as someone in need of being shielded, the teacher does not deem the child as incompetent in understanding what is going on, hence treating them as social actors when speaking with them.

Excerpt P7 above, also touches upon the subject of being seen and dealt with as a person with a life story and not a work case. This was achieved as the teacher showed interest in the

participants life and the voicing of her feelings regarding missing the pupil when gone, and the desire to have the pupil in the classroom. Such actions partly disclose an adult's emotional spectre and provides emotional visibility. Chapter 6 illustrates that children are not necessarily comfortable with disclosing their feelings and thoughts without knowing anything about their collaborative partners. This chapter indicates however, that when adults reveal their feelings, a reduction of viewing the adults as the "others" happens. The passages below will demonstrate.

P1:
R: How is it for you to see her feelings?
L: It makes me really happy to see her feelings. Then I get like, "she's got my back" and I can go to school and not worry.

P3:
R: What do teachers know well?
E: Many are good at showing emotions.
R: What do child welfare workers know well?
E: Talking to people, and they should. Many are also very good at showing that they care, reveal their emotions and actually behave caringly.
R: Is love, openness, humility and co-determination important in the process of collaboration?
E: Yes, that is very important. It is so much more comfortable when you sit in the room. You do not have to sit with your shoulders like this (showing stressed shoulders) and everything. Love and stuff make it much easier.

P4
I: There was a day she was like, "do you know, today I am having a crappy day" and then we could talk about that… and no one knew what we talked about…many liked talking to her and if she was busy she would come later and get you when she had time.

P7.
R: Which qualities and personal traits do you think are important for a teacher to have to work with children in difficult life situations?
A: To be humble, pondering and dare to ask, and dare to react when children share something painful. To be honest about their feelings and dare to show them. Dare to see the person.

In these passages, located above, it can be identified that children's experiences with getting insight into adults' emotions is contributing to good relations. The results are, in this case, that children feel that trust and confidence are increased, and relations built, which may provide security and respect towards one another. Excerpt P7 addresses the importance of adults becoming involved and approaching children in a humble way. This can be achieved by permitting feelings into the collaboration, that adults reveal what they think and feel when hearing children's accounts. This is expressed as a way to gain access to the person across the table. Looking at it differently, the passages also reveal adults' habitus of considering children as beings who are capable of seeing and hearing their feelings which says something on the perspectives that these adults have towards the children (Olesen 2012, Winter 2015). It could be argued that they see the children as competent and mature (Kjørholt 2010). It can also be argued that by showing and sharing emotions, children receive a recognition of their social status as an equal partner to that of the adults, hence strengthening their collaborative relations.

Feeling equal to your collaborative partners can be a way of preventing power struggle over social status and position (Alanen et al. 2015).

Children do not however, want adults to become an emotional mess. For instance, they prefer not to become the adult's "psychologist" nor having to comfort them. In the excerpt below, this topic is discussed by the participant.

> P6.
> **R:** What do you think teachers know too little about?
> **S:** …they need to know a little more about how to offer more of themselves without making it too personal. The pupil is not supposed to become the psychologist. Like one can tell the child that "I too had a rough childhood" so that the child does not feel alone, but they have to consider what the say at all times, so it does not end up with the children comforting the adult.

Therefore, it looks like children understand that there must be a line for how much emotional insight they should have before it becomes harmful for them. It seems that children enjoy a collaborative effort that has a balanced exchange between being professional and personally involved. The definition of what is viewed as being balanced is something that depends on the individual child, as they have different backgrounds and competences. The means to build strong relations in order to avoid treating children as cases, or that the children themselves feel like cases, is also dependant on what the informants consider to be, as one informant says, "*a language of the heart*". This topic resurfaces on several occasions during the interviews and it is about the use of body language, verbal language and emotions like being engaged, warm gestures, and being humane in social relations. The empirical data that demonstrates this finding, is presented below. Some passages are also placed in the appendix.

> P2.
> **R:** How will you describe good competences in a child welfare worker?
> **C:** How they speak language of the heart. How they communicate in a good way with their body language. Because 80% of communication is body language.

> P3.
> **R:** What role does adult's body language, voice and warm eyes influence their work with you?
> **E:** That is very important, that you are open and do not just sit like this.
> **R:** Sitting like a stick, upright and arms in a cross?
> **E:** Yeah and be engaged in the conversation. That you have eye contact, like when sitting with a buddy. That you make it feel that nothing bad will happen when you are talking with the person.
> **R:** Are there other ways that they show that you are a partner?
> **E:** Through their body language. And they said to me that they thought it was very nice that I was open towards them, and that this made it easier for them to sort things out.

> P4
> **I:** The positive thing about him from the beginning was that he was open about his own story. It is important to me that he shows more than his work life, that he has a life outside of this. Not everyone has experienced abuse as children, but they can share things like if they have animals, kids, how old they are, if they have their own family, what they like to do, if you ski or something. Just that you find something that we can have in common. That can do so much. I like to go in the mountain hiking

and he like taking trips in the mountains, so we have something and then we have something in common and that we plan the collaboration, is very important.

<u>P7.</u>
A: My last child welfare worker was very loving. She was not afraid to let me meet her family and loved talking about her foster daughter or asking for advice when she was unsure of something. She had the warmest eyes ever.

From children's experiences and perspectives, meeting adults and getting to know them beyond their professional identity, as real ordinary people which may entail access to adults' personal life, seems to be important for them. By gaining deeper insight into the adults, as people and not as billboards of their profession, can cause children to feel love, openness and care. Combined, these can open for the experience of feeling safe. Hugging pupils when they enter the classroom, sharing personal information or letting children meet the adult's family can be defined as "slimy" actions that may demand a professional to experience vulnerability, like suggested by Karlsen (2002). This is because such actions entail getting involved and the lines between professional identity and private life may be blurred. However, as described in the excerpts, children experience that such actions provide opportunities to build good relations. By having good relations, the children may feel less like cases and more like humans. It can therefore be claimed that the foundation of social relations is crucial to increase the chances of a good collaborative practise. The reason for this could be that it provides a more relaxed environment for children to disclose information that can influence better outcomes. The issue of unrelaxed environments and how it may influence the collaboration will be further discussed in the next chapter.

From my analysis it seems that when good relations are established, children experience that adults are interested in them. This influences children's image of adults as "the others" positively. For instance, trusting adults more, and the experience of equal levelled relationships. Hence, allowing and accepting vulnerability to better work with children at risk, can therefore become a tool to not only discover children at risk, but to reduce power relations to decrease the gap between children and adults, and promoting good intergenerational relations. This is because the concept of vulnerability is about looking for opportunities, though these may at first glance seem challenging or as too heavy workloads. People can learn to swim through slime, which makes practise, and eventually slime or a heavy work task feel like water, easy to swim through (Karlsen 2002). This opens for opportunities that may benefit the adults working with children at risk, and children as power relations may be reduced due to impressions that their social status is valued. This is a topic I get back to in the following chapter when discussing what may happen when children feel that adults "descend from their throne" to "fix" children.

It seems that by addressing the issue of becoming cases serves to tear down possible barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration, promote children's wellbeing and experiences with being treated as humans.

Supporting children's position against the professional

The following excerpt is about an episode where the child welfare worker sides with the child's wish to relocate to another city. As a response to the foster parents' utterances, the child welfare worker begins to advocate that the child should be allowed to move. Based on the sense-making activities of the professional, the child is allowed to do so due to the view that the child should have people around her that focus on positive aspects about the child instead of her problems.

> P7.
> **A:** My last meeting, two weeks before I moved, my foster parents attended and so did my new foster mother. I sat in the corner and had to justify as good as possible for why I should be allowed to move. While my foster parents justified for all the reasons why I should not be allowed. It was all about me struggling with school attendance, that I was sick, that I was not good enough or mature enough. They kind of just talked crap about me. Then she (social worker) became so upset that she threw my foster parents out of the room and said that they were not allowed to talk like that about me. That changed my life.
> **R:** Is this a unique course of action from a child welfare worker?
> **A:** Yes. And after she said "A, you deserve someone that speak good things about you and everything that you are good at, your strengths and qualities that makes you a good person and not just focus on the problems, because that does not lead to anything good. This is also why you will be allowed to move, so that you can live in a new place and feel good feelings". She handled this in a very fine way.

Children have the right to protection (UNCRC 1989), and in the description above, the child welfare worker seeks to protect the child from negative utterances about the child. This is seen as the child welfare worker shields the child from negative talk about her when the debate about letting her move or not arose. The foster parents seemed to be the devil's advocate and the child as victimised (sat in the corner, had to justify as good as possible). The child welfare worker enters the game by becoming a liberator, using her power as a public official. In this situation, the child welfare worker gives the child the experience of siding with her. Upon a closer look, the professional seems to exercise her role as a moral judge (White 2003). However, I find Bourdieu's concepts more enticing to understand this experience. The power differences become very clear as the foster parents had to leave the meeting room which seems to enforce the child's social status and position through recognition done by the other "player". Therefore, the symbolic capital of the professional, which was stronger than the foster parents, dominated the field of collaboration and in turn equipping the professional with power to control the meeting and affect the outcome (Bourdieu 1993, Bourdieu 2011, Tangen 2007). Hence, because of what took place, the field of interdisciplinary collaboration served to become an advantage

for the child as the outcome led to being heard and opportunity to influence the decision to move. However, to which degree that the child welfare worker was actually listening to the child is up for debate.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is about combining expertise and reaching mutual aims. However, when the foster parents are asked to leave the meeting and their power to influence the decision-making abruptly ends, one may ask if this action promotes that everyone experienced being listened to in the collaboration? It may seem like the foster parents were cut off, making it difficult to maintain good relations and that their reflections over what is best for the child were ignored. It is not unlikely to consider that the foster parents may have had some important viewpoints. Though, because of how they were presented, they were received as negative views about the child that were unwelcomed. This example indicates that keeping good relations depend a lot on how the collaborative partners view each other and respond to their actions. In this experience, the child's view was agreed to which seems to make her feel that she was taken seriously. The foster parents, however, may have left the collaboration with the complete opposite feeling, leaving the child welfare worker in the middle as the moral judge of what to be done. If one were to work after the definition of interdisciplinary collaboration, then perhaps a focus on how to establish and maintain good relations should have received greater attention. In the next heading, it is highlighted by a participant that collaborative meetings should end on a positive note so that everyone can feel good, even if the issue(s) is not solved. Hence, children are not only concerned with having their views heard, but for the other partners as well.

Excerpt P7 can be understood to show a battle over what Winter (2015), illustrates as the capital of "knowing the child best" as the involved parties claims to know what is best for the child and challenge each other. But in this situation, left the foster parents as the losing part after trading via "*contested knowledge claims about the child*" (Winter 2015, p.192). The informant shares that this episode changed her life in a good way. However, what can be analysed from the participant's narrative, is that one person had the power to ask others to leave. Why this was done can be about many things. For instance, it might have been the only possible course of action and that by asking the foster parents to leave, unblocked the chances to move forward. The participant feelings about the episode left a positive impression, which might indicate that her relations to her foster parents might not have been so good as they should have been. Something else that I take from this finding, is the importance of being able to disagree on

topics that are discussed. The social worker above showed the capability to speak up on the behalf of the child and oppose to what was being said. Other participants visit this topic as well.

> P6.
> **S:** Be able to disagree with colleagues. Dare to say that "I disagree on this".
> **R:** To stand for your own opinion?
> **S:** Yes

> P7.
> **A:** Dare to walk the mile with the child even if colleagues say "that is not so wise because that is a child and we are adults who decide over the child.

However, disagreeing or challenging others' views may lead to battles for power, for instance, the foster parents who had to leave. It seems that as long as the power struggle benefits the child, their experience and perspective might be that the interdisciplinary collaboration works well, while other adults may enforce their impressions of their collaborative partners as the "others", e.g. not trustworthy or good listeners. The finding also identifies that the field of collaboration is the dominant playground for the child welfare worker.

Meeting children with flexibility and without evaluation

The following presentations will dive into the topics of communication, conducts and flexibility, and how these topics can in many ways be tied to the concept of "the others" (Baklien 2009, Eide et al. 2015). The first example to be introduced includes that of courtesy which show children's appreciation for politeness.

> P1.
> **R:** May you share a dream situation?
> **L:** That must have been my first week at this school, because that was a dream scenario. The school did not know the child welfare and the child welfare did not know the school, so everyone was super polite and nice to each other and was really open for suggestions. They talked with each other and said, "what do you think about this and that, we will facilitate this and this". During the first week, I was like, "please let it be like this the whole school year". They were so "we will do this, we can talk, emailing"

The informant elaborates on an experience about how nice it was to start the interdisciplinary collaboration with professionals being polite, nice, openminded and accommodating towards each other. There seemed to be a high degree of tolerance present which and when maintained, can be experienced as positive for the efficiency of the field of interdisciplinary collaboration, from the perspective of the child. This is also in line with the list made by Winsvold on how to achieve successful collaboration by for instance, using the keys of *attributes*, *openness* and *respect* (Winsvold 2011, p. 103-108). However, the participant's hopes for these attributes to last, indicate that this is not something that can be expected. When adding her perspectives on what her dream scenario is, awakens an even greater suspicion.

> P1.

> **R:** What is your dream situation?
> **L:** In my dream scenario I wish for everyone to be understanding, speak openly and not just end a meeting because people disagree. But that we can talk about it until things are good and after, the process of dealing with the problem will often begin by itself.

I interpret from these excerpt that keeping good relations in interdisciplinary collaboration may be challenging and that "othering" is something that can develop gradually after forming the interdisciplinary collaborative team. The concept of "othering" is, as mentioned in chapter 3, about forming images of the other collaborative partners which can make the maintaining of good relations difficult if they are negative (Baklien 2009). According to Bourdieu (1993), habitus is a system of dispositions that function as a system that generate strategies. In excerpts P1, the polite, openminded and flexible approach that the collaborative partners have towards each other can be an indication that, though being familiar with the field of collaboration, they are new to each other. However, in the second passage it seems that habitus has been in play longer, giving time to the players in the field to orientate themselves about the other players. This means that habitus has generated strategies which enables the players to act and make quick decisions about what they experience in the collaboration (ibid, Olesen 2012). In the second P1 excerpt, the participant describes that she would prefer that meetings should not end due to disagreements. This indicates that good relations may not have been maintained and that the images of each other, have in this participant's experience, led to meetings ending when disagreements arise. It can also be other reasons for why this is happens, but it seems like "othering" can be a cause behind it (Baklien 2009). In the first P1 excerpt, the participant describes that by asking questions, being accommodating towards one another and polite is the key to good relations, and that when disagreements happen, it should be talked about until the meeting is left with a good feeling and not "give up" on a bad note which may promote bad relations. The empirical data above also illustrate that children are aware of the importance of adults being able to collaborate with other adults and not just the child for the collaboration to be fruitful, as addressed previously. Hence, it can be understood that for the synergy to be good in collaborative efforts, adults must actively seek to understand each other's professional status and responsibilities to reduce the pitfall of "othering" as suggested by Baklien (2009).

The following sections will focus more on team player's willingness to adjust to the needs of the other players. From children's point of view, when adults are willing to adjust their work-schedule to that of the child's weekly schedule, an environment of respect may be created. By scheduling interdisciplinary collaborative meetings to a time that does not negatively affect the child's plans for the week or colliding with homework, school test or recreational activities, can

prevent children from feeling like cases and may also remain a control over their own lives (Bessel 2011). The empirical data below presents children's experiences with time arrangements.

> P3.
> **R:** Were you permitted to choose things like when to meet during the day?
> **E:** Yes. I had the opportunity to decide when to meet and when was the best time. They were pretty openminded and flexible in those matters.

> P5.
> **R:** Have you had the chance to decide the time of a collaborative meeting?
> **H:** Yes, sometimes. Or with all the responsibility meetings[46] actually. That is the interdisciplinary meeting. So, if I have like a test at school then we do the meeting later that day.

Additionally, by not interrupting children's lives increases their chances of feeling like other children who are not in public care. This is highlighted in the passage below.

> P5.
> **H:** If there was a good collaboration between the school, the child welfare organisation and me?
> **R:** Yes
> **H:** What was important for me was that I could feel as normal as possible, since I was in public care. That worked out really well with the collaboration I experienced

Adults ability to be flexible may depend on how they view children. It looks like the adults in the examples above treated the children like clients who had ownership in the collaboration, which made the collaboration go well (Winsvold 2011). Hence, they are treated as vulnerable due to being clients of the public care, but also as capable actors as they have influential opportunities (Sandberg 2015). In return, the children gain a positive experience with interdisciplinary collaboration since the adults adjusted to their weekly schedule, treated them as competent and accommodated their wish for a "normal" life, which can be tied to privacy.

When following up on the narrative about the "jackpot" teacher something else was discovered to work well for interdisciplinary collaboration. The excerpt below presents two things that caught my eye, namely the participant's comment regarding being youthful, and that of being curious or wonder instead of assuming.

> P7.
> **R:** So, this jackpot teacher was considered so because she invested time outside the standard?
> **A:** Yes, and she was youthful. She was in her forties and had an A4 family, but she had this human approach. She always wondered instead of thinking she knew.

What is revealed in this finding is that children prefer adults to ask instead of assuming to know. A "wondering" approach to ask questions means to avoid negative, critical and attacking questions. This definition derives from the excerpt that follows.

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[46] Responsibility meetings are equivalent to the English LAC meetings explained in chapter 3.

R: What does it mean to wonder?
A: It is to not ask critical questions, instead ask questions because you want to know. So instead of saying like "why did you do that?" you say, "what was that about really?". In a way you ask the questions in a totally different way than the critical way. Like, one must have a different ambition behind the questions.

It looks like children call for questions to be asked sincerely as perhaps opposite to an inquired investigation. To be sincere includes avoiding assumptions. This goes hand in hand with the finding above, that children may want to feel that adults are genuinely interested in their wellbeing. However, adults may have an agenda when joining inn on collaborative efforts due to their responsibilities of carrying out state agendas as public officials. This can make it difficult to ask sincere questions, but far from impossible, as they are already out on a quest. E.g. to solve issues that prevent the child's wellbeing from their perspective. However, when posing good questions, children are inclined to consider adults as people who reach out caringly. The results of this may be trust, good relations, respect and being embraced in a holistic way, which Winsvold (2011) argues as important for collaborative efforts.

The other thing about the "jackpot" teacher was her youthfulness, though being forty years old. My thoughts here went immediately to the topic of power and Christensen's discussion on the possibility of becoming different kinds of adults (Christensen 2004). A different kind of adult includes that the adult becomes sensitive to adult-child differences such as ways of speaking, dress styles or power differences (ibid). It seems like the mentioned teacher places attention to this because of her approach, as being described, as youthful. Consequently, the gap between the adult and the child may have been experienced as reduced by the child. Hence, the teacher has become a different kind of adult through the child's experience of her youthfulness. Becoming a different kind of adult can be used as a tool. In this case, the teacher used her "youthfulness" to meet the child in a way that the child experienced as being human which was combined with her ability to ask good questions without seeming critical. Combined, the participant's image of the teacher became very positive, which in turn pushes for good relations. As seen in the next chapter, levelling to children's understanding, language usage and apparel plays a role in reducing or enforcing power. This is also where one of the possible contradictions in the interview data is found. On the one side, children want adults to speak closer to their own language and talking style, but on the other side, they seem to dislike adults who use specific methods when engaging with children. The topic of talking in certain ways will be further addressed and is about adults using specific words or responses when conversing with children. This can also be a reason to why children emphasise the importance of adults knowing how to

communicate and relate to children with care and love as an alternative to the talking "techniques" they have encountered when collaborating with adults[47].

Collaborating with children may entail that adults must relate to diagnoses, as this may be a part of children's life. This opens for the danger of treating children's symptoms of a diagnose, which can make children experience that their adult partners are interested in finding out what is wrong with them instead of caring about what they think and feel on the inside. The passage below illustrates how the participant has experienced being both the problem and not, and it is clear that she prefers the focus of the latter.

> <u>P7.</u>
> **R:** Does the teacher or the child welfare treat your views as symptoms when you collaborate?
> **A:** I have experienced a lot of it before. Because I had ADHD, ADD, emotional disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia and what the fuck did I not have, like. But today we do not talk about my special evaluation or to find out what is wrong with me. Now we talk about what must happen for me to be happy and we find solutions together.

In this excerpt we meet a participant that has been under the care of child welfare organisation most of her life. In her early teens she experienced being prescribed various diagnoses by professionals and from the perspective of the informant, this led to the collaboration focusing on how to treat the symptoms of the diagnoses. It is also indicated that her diagnoses became an explanation for the child's views which could then be dismissed as invalid, making adults the "knowers" of what is best for the child. However, now, that she is aged 16, the focus has changed from working from the outset of the diagnoses to the outset of what can help the child to be happy. The participant suggests that because of this, her collaboration with teachers and child welfare workers has improved.

This finding indicates that by focusing on avoiding special evaluation, adults become more receptable to "see" the child as a person and not the child as diagnose. Hence, the change of focus can be analysed to increase children's experience of adults being interested in them instead of their diagnoses. It seems like this led the participant to feel that the adults and her are now setting aims together. This in turn can promote feelings of inclusion and opportunity to influence through the freedom of speech. I find it worth considering that children in public care have by law, the right to be heard from aged 7 (Barnevernloven 1992). The law includes that children who are younger and capable of forming own opinions should also be heard, receive information and be provided with chances to influence decisions (ibid). However, from aged 15, children during procedures may appear as a party in a case, if they understand the subject-

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[47] See chapter 6.

matter of the case (ibid, § 6-3). I cannot help but to notice that the participant represented in excerpt P6 recently passed the age of fifteen. This made me consider if the shift that has taken place in her collaboration is influenced by the age-based law since the law gives the child increased rights to participate. Hence, do adults consider children to have increased competences due to the law? I identify that a possible explanation is that the adults' perspectives, after the child has turned 15, believe that the child better knows how and what can contribute for their wellbeing. If this is so, then perhaps the law influences adults' views of children as competent.

The importance of predictable procedures

This section will highlight the importance of having formalities in order to achieve successful collaboration. In the excerpt below, the participant describes a detailed schedule for how often they had collaborative meetings, the agenda and purpose of the meetings and who was going to be present.

> P3.
> **R:** Do you have regular collaborating meetings between you, the child welfare organisation and the school? Who participate and how is it organised?
> **E:** Yes. We met twice a week and we talked about how I was doing.
> **R:** You are the first to reply accordingly.
> **E:** Yeah, I was lucky.
> **R:** Did anyone else participate?
> **E:** No. It was just me, my teacher and contact person in the child welfare. Sometimes it was just me and my contact person.
> **R:** What did you collaborate on?
> **E:** How to progress into the future, about my situation and we talked a little about what had happened, what had improved and what is still bad. We discussed how to move forward.
> **R:** What are your feelings concerning the meetings?
> **E:** They helped me a lot. I received more insight into what was going to happen. This encouraged me and my days a lot more than it would have without them. I felt that on this and this, I did not have to worry anymore. Instead I could focus on other things like friends, homework and school. I could focus on everything else.

One of the necessities for a successful collaboration is having the time to collaborate. In the empirical data above, there is a well-established procedure to get together to discuss collaborative aims, how they work, what has been achieved and what needs further attention. This gives an impression of a well-structured agenda which may lead to finding good measures, keeps the adults and the child informed and the feeling of the meetings as useful and effective. In turn, this may leave the collaborative members energized and positive about the meeting and the progress. None of the other participants can account for having such a formal procedure in their collaboration and that when meetings take place it happens sporadically, in their opinion. This finding could suggest that setting and having a regular structure for collaboration increases the collaborative team's ability to have productive collaboration, build close relations, find good

solutions and set productive aims, as long as the child is included in the process, as identified in excerpt P3. According to Tropman (2013), meeting agendas are essential for a successful and effective meeting. The participant also expresses that due to having a fruitful collaboration, other stress he experienced was relieved. For instance, he could focus on friends, build meaningful relations and give attention to school performance. Therefore, it seems that a productive collaborative effort may increase children's school performance due to releasing the participant of having to deal with the situation at home by himself. The participant also expresses that he felt that he was one of the "lucky" ones to have the established collaborative efforts he experienced. This indicate that he is of the opinion that his experience with collaboration is out of the ordinary, which he might be right in believing.

Children's social status and position

I will now turn to an excerpt that deals with the topic of social status and position in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration. The passage below shows the importance of children experiencing that adults can admit mistakes and being humble in their relations with children.

> P3.
> **R:** Why is this view important that they are willing to bow to you?
> **E:** Well, it makes you trust them more. That they are capable to see their mistakes. That they didn't like "no, you are young, and you are wrong, and we are professional" view. It wasn't like that, they understood, or they gave in.
> **R:** Did it ever exist that the adults in their collaboration with you had premeditated thoughts and views that was damaging for their perspective of you?
> **E:** In the beginning they judged me to be a closed person and not open at all. I noticed this quickly because they never asked me any questions. They just presumed instead and that made it difficult in the beginning. But when they got to know me, they found out that I was open and then things improved.

Participant in P3 shares that in the initial stages of the collaboration he was judged by the adults as a quiet and evasive person. The participant assumes this as the adults never asked him any questions. He explains that this caused trouble for the collaboration in the beginning. However, this improved as the adults made efforts to get to know the participant. It seems that this caused the participant to trust his collaborative partners more. Also, the experience of adults being capable of admitting to their mistakes groomed trust. He also emphasises that he appreciated that the adults did not possess the view that children lack knowledge because they are young or the view that that because adults are professionals, children are automatically wrong. How the professionals came to possess this view is not easy to identify. It might be that because the child opposed the adults' actions, as presented in the next passage, they might have had an awakening of habitus forced upon them by the child, as described by Winter (2015), hence the explanation for adults "giving in". The participant expresses that when he opposed to tasks that was placed

upon him, the adults eventually realised their mistakes. Hence, it might be that from the perspective of the participant, he received increased social status and position in the collaboration and that his power struggle was successful. This is further elaborated in chapter 6 under the section "Reclaiming control". Because of his status and position in the teamwork, participant in P3 shares that he had influential power on decision-making, as seen in the passage below.

> P3.
> **R:** Did you get to influence measures made for you?
> **E:** Yes. Like I noticed that when they forced me to do things and I told them that this was not okay, they stopped with it. Like that thing with my parents, and they did not bring that topic up again. What I said was what they worked with. I noticed that very well. Because I have told things that I wanted to happen, and I must have influenced because I got what I wanted. So yes.

Because of this finding, I interpret that how adults view the children's social status and position in the collaboration, will affect children's opportunity to influence matters regarding their life. It is also seen that adults' ability to show humility and admit wrong doings is important to children and their experience of being recognised as a collaborative partner. This shows that a fruitful collaboration may be dependent on how much adults recognise children as competent beings and their ability to contribute.

Final remarks

As a closure to this chapter, I would like to highlight that all the informants have the perspective that interdisciplinary collaboration with teachers and child welfare workers is important. The passages below are some of the things they shared which have to do with children's overall evaluation about why the method should be in use.

> P1.
> **L:** I think it is very good that the school and the child welfare work together. Because it is a place where you use much of your life. Collaborating can make their jobs easier.

> P2.
> **C:** I actually think it is very important that the child welfare and the school collaborate. They meet the child more than the child welfare worker. But we have to know that it happens. I am pretty sure that the school and the child welfare worked with my case, but I was never informed.

> P3.
> **E:** Yes. We meet teachers, and other adults at school very often and over a long period of time. We attend school for many years and some days are really long. Sometimes, children are more at school and SFO than at home with their parents. That is why the child welfare organisation should not just work with parents, but rather with the school which is a place that the kids are. The school is actually responsible for the children too. So, it is very important that there is a collaboration.

> P6.
> **S:** Yes, there should be interdisciplinary collaboration. It is a good thing because you must know the different support groups. As adults you must be able to talk together, but if you are, the child must actually be an equal partner, no matter the age he or she is.

A: Yes. Some situations are very important to collaborate. It is okay to give teachers information, but they always have to collaborate with the child. The child welfare organisation cannot share information to teachers without the child's permission.

Some of the things that are mentioned by the participants are that interdisciplinary collaboration can make adults' jobs easier, that the school should be involved in interdisciplinary collaboration because children spend much time there, often more than they do with the child welfare worker and that adults should be aware of all the support groups available for children. In addition, despite varying practices and experiences with interdisciplinary collaboration all the participants say yes to the method as a possible way to improve their lives and appreciates the possibilities it brings.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is important. Not just from adult's perspectives, but children's as well. Children have strong opinions on today' practice and about what they think is important to focus on when collaborating. More of this will be identified in the chapter 6. In sum, this chapter interprets collaborative efforts that works well to be about the affectionate professional care, keeping confidentiality, good use of information flow, taking children seriously, building good relations to prevent images of "the others" and opportunities to influence decision-making. When children experience these elements in their collaborative team, they feel that the method is not only for adults but for them as well and that they are deemed as valuable collaborative partners. When exploring practitioners' memories of working with children in public care, Fern (2014) discovered that the practitioners who recognise children as experts on their own circumstances had the tendency to empower children. Because of this, children were beginning to influence decision-making and gain greater control over their lives (ibid). In light my own work, I find my findings to support Fern (2014), though through the experiences and perspectives of children themselves. It is evident that children deem interdisciplinary collaboration as the means improve life circumstances and create future possibilities.

The next chapter deals with possible barriers to the method or field of interdisciplinary collaboration. The empirical data provides much information on this topic, as most of the participants describe difficult experiences with it and the reasons why it does not always work well.

Chapter 6 – Asymmetry - When it does not work well

I choose to begin this chapter with children's definition of interdisciplinary collaboration. I then move on to two main themes; that of power and ambiguity. Again, children's experiences and perspectives are the source of investigation. The main purpose of this chapter is to present barriers, diverse issues and challenges in relation to interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers, child welfare workers and children. I attempt to illustrate when the method of interdisciplinary collaboration, used by the professionals, does not work well. Two of the participants in this project shares a positive experience all-around, however the remaining participants revealed early in the interviews that they felt that their experiences with collaboration between teachers and child welfare workers were often challenging. By understanding the reasons behind why the method of interdisciplinary collaboration did not work well, makes it possible to produce knowledge on how to better apply the method and achieve shared aims that may result in helping children with their difficult life situations. Also, this might reveal why some of the informants have a positive experience and others not. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I have chosen to place some passages produced by the participants that demonstrates findings, in the appendix. The same goes for this chapter as well.

Children's definition of collaboration

The participants were all asked what collaboration meant to them. This was to find out if their understanding of the concept was in line with the definition used in this thesis. I was fascinated when their replies were as close as it comes to the definitions produced by Glavin and Erdal (2018) and Eriksen and Germeten (2012)[48], since it shows children's knowledge and wise reflections about the theoretical purpose of collaboration. The passages below demonstrate this.

> P1.
> **R**: What does collaboration mean to you?
> **L:** Collaboration is when we care about each other and help each other.
> **R:** Is it important that it exists?
> **L:** Yes, I feel that when there is a team effort it creates more understanding.
> **R:** Why is that so?
> **L:** Well, I feel that because they have different backgrounds I can know more, receive better understanding for what they are doing.
> **R.** And what happen to you when you get this insight?
> **L**: If I am informed about why things are done as they are, I get a lot more understanding for their job and I can try and help them instead of destroying it for them.
>
> P6.
> **R:** What does collaboration mean to you?
> **S:** Collaboration is when I am an equal partner with other people and that I can speak and that we together can find good solutions to things.

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[48] See chapter 2

P7.
R: What does collaboration mean to you?
A: The way I learned about collaboration was that my foster dad made rules, and then I came and said I did not want to agree on this, and then it came "Please A, just collaborate". I remember thinking that this is not collaboration, but it is when you can bring your opinion and I can come with mine and we meet in the middle. It is not like you are right or that I get my will, but it should be that what I have to say is important in the decisions that are being made.

I interpret that children, when entering the field of interdisciplinary collaboration or the public support system, have expectations to what collaboration entails. Some of these expectations include care, help, team effort, mutual understanding, being informed, equal partnership, "the best interest of the child" as the outset of decision-making and willingness to compromise. Fern (2014) argues that when practitioners make their knowledge and resources visible to the children they work with and simultaneously appreciate children as experts of their own lives, children are more likely to be treated as actors working alongside adults. As seen in excerpt P1, the participant argues that when she is informed, it increases the chances that she can contribute instead of trying to destroy adults' efforts. Hence, it seems that my finding is in line with Fern (2014), that children are more likely to participate in the collaboration when taken seriously. It will be highlighted later in this chapter that one of the sources for children's possible negative experiences with collaboration can be connected to how adults treat them as partners and whether adults' definition of collaboration extends to children or limited to adults only. As established in chapter 2, people may understand the definition of interdisciplinary collaboration diversely. Even so, one could expect that the definition provided by Glavin and Erdal (2018), is known to public officials like teachers and child welfare workers as it is recommended to be used by their place of employment (ibid). I will later show that when children' work instructions and/or definition of collaboration and is not in line with what they experience when cooperating with adults, power struggle may take place.

"Collaboration is for adults"

This finding is about children feeling and experiencing that interdisciplinary collaboration is constructed more for adults than for children. This perspective is often formed shortly after entering the field of collaboration. The passage below is about a child's initial experience with interdisciplinary team efforts to collaborate. The participant shares that being called to sit in a meeting with 13 adults, only knowing 3 of them, was scary and painful. This was due to all the strangers and because the child experienced during the meeting that she was overlooked and talked about in third person. This made her feel invisible for the adults and excluded from

participating. As a result, the child felt that adults were addressing issues and challenges from their perspective leading to, what she felt, wrong measures.

P7.
A: I remember from the case list that I received, on my way to the first responsibility meeting, that there were 13 names on it and I only knew 3 of them... I remember thinking "just turn the car!". I did not want to be there. I almost had an anxiety attack from it because it was so scary that I had to be in that meeting. The next time I went to a meeting, I sat there and listened to people talk about me in third person, even though I was sitting right there and was present. That really hurts. Then, at the end of the meeting, they were like "yes, do you have anything more to say A?" when they had already been sitting there for a whole hour talking about me and my life, the things I struggle with and what I need, without me ever getting to say anything during the conversation…they talked about me like I wasn't even there. I think meetings are just made for adults to come together and talk about a child. Usually adults don't know the child's problems and they place the problem in the child instead of the child's surroundings. So, it becomes like when a psychologist or a doctor say "yes, no, the child has these symptoms, perhaps we should analyse these, get a treatment" or "oh no, she is so depressed, perhaps she should be on anti-depressive pills". It becomes that kind of solutions, like "she struggles with math, we must put her in a special math class and give her special education". This again place the child in a very vulnerable position, like an outcast of society.

I interpret this finding to deal with several issues like intimidation, the blindfold of diagnoses, communicative skills, perspectives on "the best interest of the child" and, lastly victimising. I interpret that because the participant in this context was positioned with less social and cultural capital than the adults, meaning their education, employment and social relations, the child finds the meeting intimidating or scary to enter the field of collaboration. One reason for this might be that children have less knowledge of how "to play the game" of collaboration, though having a clear definition of its purpose. This might be because they are newcomers to the field of collaboration and have so far not ascribed embodied dispositions (habitus) to play the field (Bourdieu 1993, Olesen 2012). However, this seems to change as children acquire experiences with interdisciplinary collaboration with the teacher and the child welfare worker. I identify that they after some time seek ways to use the field of collaboration to their own advantage. This is described later. Adults are more likely to have found themselves in collaborative structures more than once. Therefore, I interpret when reading the excerpt P7, that the child experiences being dominated by the adults due to not being integrated into the conversation before the end of the meetings. The issue of being dominated may happen when people come together and some have more capital than others (Sayer 2017, Bourdieu 1984). This may result in the child losing control over own life due to bureaucratic processes (Bessell 2011). In other words, it seems like the child's social status and position have become reduced in the excerpt above, as adults' degrees and life experiences provide them power to play the game of collaboration and degrading the child's ability to contribute from the very beginning. Power as discussed by Bourdieu (1993), is created culturally and symbolically. This is related to a person's social status and position in the field they operate in (ibid). Because of this, it looks

like issues related to power are likely to arise in the field of collaboration as it includes intergenerational relations.

I also analyse that adults' failure to fully include the child in meetings is influenced by their perspectives regarding the child. In this case, this may be about them considering knowing and having clear and predefined assumptions about what is best for the child. The capital of knowing the child best is discussed by Winter (2015) as something that will challenge and affect peoples' social status. It seems like in the situation above that the presence of the child is more a formality where the child's socials status and position is strongly reduced. In turn this leads to the child's attendance to become a tokenistic gesture for participation (Bessell 2011). I find the excerpt below to also demonstrate this issue. In this excerpt the participant emphasises that just because the collaboration looks like it works well does not mean it actually does so.

> P4
> **I:** I think that they believe that they know best all the time because it looks like a good collaboration on the surface. But the cooperation is usually between adults and the child is on the side-line.

If viewing excerpt P7 slightly differently, the issue of not including the child before the end of a meeting may be a consideration to the "best interest of the child". If this is so, the concept of the best interest becomes an excuse to not listen to the child (Kjørholt 2010). Instead of using the method of interdisciplinary collaboration as a key to find and maintain what the child needs, one crucial participant is excluded, which may lead to the wrong implementation of measures (Fugleseth and Ekker 1998, Kjørholt 2010). Therefore, I interpret that the child's experience, as narrated above, is an example of adults' perspectives being used to decide the child needs. This topic is discussed by Cossar et al. (2016) when arguing how adults' professional judgement and practice strongly influence children's participatory opportunities due to the extent that they seek their views and place weight on those views. In P7, it seems like the adults place little weight on the child' views due to not seeking them before at the very end of the meeting when conclusions have already been made, making it look like there is an expectation that the child will just go along with what is decided. Not listening to the child may enforce the child's perspective of the adults as "the others" (Baklien 2009). In this situation it looks like the adults, as "the others", form a collaboration that leaves the child with injured feelings due to being talked about in third person while being present and her interpretations of what that means. E.g. an "outcast" of society and being a case.

A different interpretation can be related to that of communication. The excerpt shows that the child is approached at the end of the meeting with a few follow-up questions. Physically meeting together does not automatically ensure good communication. This is mentioned by

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Hall (2005) in his suggestion on having students to focus on how to communicate across the borders of their work field, before leaving for employment. Talking across the borders of a sector is not the only issue at play. Christiansen (2012) argues that the lack of competences enabling adults to communicate with children is another concern. Hence, the issue of tokenistic participation can be caused by the adult team players' lack of ability to talk with children, which possibly make the child form negative perspectives about the collaboration. The participants in the excerpts above may have dealt with adults who lack communicative skills to fruitfully collaborate with children. However, I will further elaborate what children entail as poor communicative skills.

> P1.
> **R:** Is there anything that you miss in your interdisciplinary collaboration between you, the school and the child welfare organisation?
> **L:** In the beginning I experienced a little bit that I was less informed and that I had to be very adult like. I had to adopt to their situation and rest my case, that is not good as times go on. Because then there was no point in me going to meetings because I did not understand what they said. I also had to use their professional language, and that frustrated me since it stopped me from participating

> P7.
> **R:** how does that affect you?
> **C:** It makes me want to leave. I do not like it when people use talking techniques on me. I do not like it when people make notes of what I say without me getting to know what is written in that book. I want people to react in a normal way and not like "yes, you say that, hmm, yes, and yes violence, hmm". It is always expected that we should continue talking but we need follow up questions, too. Don't bother about how the university taught you to speak. Instead talk to me like I am a friend or another ordinary child. That makes us feel a lot safer than being met with talking techniques. We have our antennas on alert and notice very quickly if methods are used on us. That makes me insecure

In these excerpts the participants introduce issues related to how adults have dialogues with children, follow-up questions and the pressure placed on children to speak like adults. It seems like the children dislike what they call talking techniques as presented in P7, for instance, "yes, you say that, hmm, yes, and violence, hmm yes". Other participants describe similar experiences. Though children in my data have expressed that they strongly dislike adults using speaking patterns, I argue that they want different kinds of "talking techniques" that adults can use when conversing with them. This might include adults speaking with words that children understand combined with diverse approaches such as being youthful or affectionate. I interpret that they are looking for what Christensen (2004) have called, different kinds of adults who are aware of adult-child differences. In 2009, the government published films and a guide on how to speak with children, in the context of child welfare (Regjeringen.no 2009). In these assets the focus is placed on the "good conversation" which includes how to talk and listen to children. This seems to be in line with my findings about how children would prefer adults to talk to them. Hence, there seems to be a gap between theory and practice. The participants also feel

that adults at times expect them to talk without receiving good follow-up question. When studying the "good conversation" one of the suggestions given to adults is to ask open question (ibid). It seems that a pitfall of this is that it may lead children to feeling that they are leading a monologue and that adults are not really interested in what they say due to not asking questions. Hence, ambiguity may be created as described in <u>P7</u> when adults write notes, and the children do not know what is recorded. It is also mentioned that it is pointless for children to attempt to participate of they do not understand what adults are discussing. Therefore, adults must converse in a way that children can follow and comprehend the conversation, when included in collaborative efforts. Lastly, children sometimes feel that adults expect them to speak adult-like to be taken seriously. Children often do not possess the same language skills as adults; hence this can make it difficult to express what they think which may then lead to valuable information, that the child holds, remain unspoken. In addition, adults may not know young people's language, therefore creating double barriers for collaboration.

As described above, there are several possible ways of interpreting the reasons behind the child's negative experience of responsibility meetings[49]. I would like to briefly discuss the name of the Norwegian LAC[50] meeting, namely responsibility meeting before moving on. The name indicates that people will take responsibility about the child's wellbeing but as identified in this chapter, this is not always achieved. This finding is in line with Hall (2005), who argues that when people know too little about the other collaborative partners and their expertise, it may cause confusion about people's responsibilities, hence opening up for no one taking responsibility, which is a paradox to the name of the collaborative meeting. Going back to the topic of negative experiences with responsibility meetings, the first excerpt under this heading, expressed that the focus of the collaborative meeting was understood to be about treating symptoms. For instance, depression may be treated with drugs or math problems treated with extracurricular classes. This may place the problems in the child instead of the child's surroundings, risking the implementation of wrong measures. Children and adults are dependent on diagnoses for various reasons; however, it seems that in many instances, diagnoses can also become an obstacle as adults' focus may become misplaced. Eriksen and Germeten (2012) emphasise that when adults' focus is misplaced, the child risks becoming stereotyped. It seems that diagnoses can cause difficulties for a productive collaboration between the child and the professionals.

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[49] Directly translated from the Norwegian ansvarsmøter.
[50] Looked after child

Reclaiming control

As the heading indicates, this finding is about children's ways of reclaiming control of their lives through the means of challenging adults' authority and expertise. These sections also bring the topic of power on the radar and presents itself through children's struggle to redefine their social status and position. The passages below mention ways that children try to reclaim control in the collaborative efforts.

> P1.
> **R**: Have you been subjected to do things as your part of the collaboration?
> **L:** Yes, but then I just thought "I did not agree to this, so the joke in on you (referring to the teacher and child welfare worker)" ha-ha
>
> P3.
> **R**: Have you experienced mandatory assignments that you consciously broke and then after met with disappointment by the adults?
> **E**: Yes, in the beginning I did everything that they told me, but then I felt that this was just too much and that this did not work, and I could not focus on anything else. So, then I just gave a shit about it. Then it got a little like "well, but you said you were going to do this", but I was like "but this is not my job, I do not receive money for watching over my parents if they are drinking or not". So, then the child welfare organisation was disappointed until they realised the greater perspective, that what they did was wrong.
> **R**: What do you think caused you to stop trusting adults, prevent you from talking with them and instead fake that things are ok?
> **E:** I can sense it on their body language how they are talking with me. So, I close myself pretty much up, lie a little and make stuff up. So, it has a lot to do with how they act and their body language and so on.
>
> P6.
> **S:** If someone pressure me into something I did not want, then I create a living hell for them to go through with it. That is how simple it is. Also, they could have avoided additional work only by talking to the child and let him or her decide a bit.

I analyse the empirical data above to be about children's ability to refuse to adapt and conform to their adult collaborative partners. This is seen by how the children chose to not take adults seriously and ignore the tasks they are given because they never agreed to do them in the first place. Hence the comment of "the joke is on you" in excerpt P1, as the collaboration may not play out as adults planned. Children may also verbally express their refusal to perform work tasks, lie, withhold information, invent stories and if including the empirical data placed in the appendix, go directly against instructions or withdraw from the collaboration, e.g. by making a "living hell" as stated in P6.

The interview data disclose that the passages above is about the participants' repeating battle over their social status and position in interrelatedness with adults, in the setting of interdisciplinary collaboration, which is in line with the arguments of Mayall (2015). This might be because stakes, which in this case are about adults' perspectives of what children should do as contributing to the collaboration, and the children as disagreeing over what is best for them.

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are not shared among the them (Peillon 1998). As a result, children's symbolic capital may be seen as being reduced by the adults when they first seek to enforce the tasks that has been placed upon the children, hence objectifying them instead of seeing children as agents. However, in excerpt P3 the adults later understood that the better option might be to include the child in a higher degree. Because of this it seems that the child's social status in the collaboration is increased due to refusing adults' decisions. It can therefore be seen that children use their own strategies to challenge the power which is at play. Even though children started out with less knowledge of the field of collaboration, they seek ways to make it work for what they perceive as their advantage. I therefore interpret that children's habitus is in use as the children form dispositions and make their moves according to their resources as a response to adults' collaborative practice. This is in line with Bourdieu, who emphasise that the newcomer to a field will strive to break through the entry barrier of the field while the adults may try to defend their monopoly (Bourdieu 1993). I also suggest this finding to be about trust and responsibility. This is because children, as seen in excerpt P3, may refuse responsibility that they deem to be beyond their responsibility and competences. This is a topic that Backe-Hansen (2016) visits when addressing that children might feel that their "duties" in the collaboration is deemed too risky for them to contribute, and therefore prevent them from participating. An issue worth considering is that children at risk have likely already experienced difficulties with having too much responsibility due to having parents with diverse challenges. Therefore, children's trust towards collaborative partners may be reduced when they feel burdened with responsibilities from the public support network.

Instead of interpreting children's actions as bad behaviour, I understand them to be a powerplay about reclaiming their social status and position and that this is done through diverse strategies. I argue that these actions of refusing to conform, represent children as capable of recognising when their social status is weakened in the collaborative efforts, and therefore seek to strengthen their position in order to gain better control over their own lives. Children's refusal to conform to adults or making decisions such as to lie, are perhaps actions that children use to oppose the collaboration that is taking place. In other words, "bad" behaviour can be an indication of a power imbalance in the interrelatedness with adults and that the child is not on board with the measures or actions that are formed upon them. For instance, it seems like when collaboration is experienced as forced, can cause children to feel that they are not equal partners to the adults. Making such an interpretation of children's actions is in line with Mayall (2015) who argues that children seek to force adults to recognise their competences. The reasons for why the adults,

as the other "game-players", may fail to accept children's status next to adults is a topic I visit later. I interpret the discussed finding to present an example where children seek to influence the field of collaboration and how it should enfold, according to themselves. When children do not experience being taken seriously or are "stepped over", they seek to employ strategies that may serve as barriers to prevent further collaboration until adults recognise and value their insight and competences.

As mentioned, only two of the informants describe a fruitful collaboration and the person in excerpt P3 is one of them. I suggest that one of the reasons for why he feels that the collaborative efforts was productive was because of what happens after he challenged the adult's power. In the middle of the excerpt the participant shares "*So, then the child welfare organisation was disappointed until they realised the greater perspective, that what they did was wrong*". Here it can be interpreted that because of refusing to conform, the adults taken-for-granted perspective about how the child could have a watchful eye on the parents and their drinking habits, was challenged. Consequently, the adults as later described in the interview, apologised and admitted that what they asked of the child was wrong, relieving him off the task. Hence, the adults' response was to accept the child's objection and recognise his voice on the matter, leading him to feel that the adults' listened. The other participant, who also shares the experience of a useful and valuable collaboration, describes something similar.

> P1.
> **L:** I lose the desire to work with them. I just want to say that "if you don't want to help me then you can just go ahead and try and do all the work yourself and see how far you get".
> **R:** What makes you return to the collaboration?
> **L:** Humans make mistakes. Adults tend to think that "But I am an adult, and once I was a child, but now I know better, better than her" (the child). However, they do not know more and then they realise that, and that their efforts aren't good enough. Then we can go back and talk about why it didn't work and stuff.

In this excerpt the informant presents adults who reach an understanding that without including the child in the decision-making, it may be difficult to implement right measures, which is in line with Kjørholt (2010). Hence, the child's social status and position is recognised, but only after the adults have tried to find solutions on their own, which is then recognised as not productive. This leads to, as seen in the excerpt P1, that adults turn to the child more willing to provide participation and influential opportunities, according to the child. This then increases the child's social position and status in the collaboration. Fern (2014) argues that when adults can admit that it is okay for children to sometimes know the answers when they do not, participation can happen on a more equal footing and includes that children's views are heard. However, when power struggle grows between children and adults, the remaining participants,

despite using similar strategies for empowerment, share that successful outcomes were not achieved, like the excerpts above. This is understood to be caused by adults' persistence to keep the monopoly of the field (Bourdieu 1993). None of the other participants present narratives that resemble the ones above, rather they present a description of spiralling down, hence to why this caught my eye. It may look like the children who had their social status and position increased experienced good collaboration and the ones that did not, experienced it as more fruitless than fruitful. Neither does it look like there are any differences in the informants' experiences due to their gender.

When the powerplay becomes too straining

The longer excerpt below is about a child's effort to be taken seriously, to be seen, heard and given opportunities to influence outcomes. When this is not achieved the child turns to more serious actions through "rebellion". However, as can be read in the excerpt, when several attempts keep getting ignored, this can lead to serious consequences. For instance, the child turns to violence against adults, the view of the adults as helpers becomes strongly negative and eventually it seems like the child struggles with depression and anger. As a result, the child looks elsewhere for help and to be taken seriously. In the narrative, the child describes that she became a gang member to be with people of mutual opinions about the public support system. However, before turning to crime and substance abuse, the child tried "milder" approaches to gain control over and influence her life. Some of these included being the naughty kid, the perfect kid, self-harming and even "practicing" eating disorders. Despite diverse attempts to relate to adults, the child experienced that the adults presided over her and that she was excluded from decision-making.

> P7.
> **R:** Did you feel you had to rebel to be noticed?
> **A:** Yes.
> **R:** Have you experienced a lack of faith regarding collaboration?
> **A:** Yup.
> **R:** How did that make you feel, think, or affect you?
> **A:** It made me think "what is the point with this if what I say is not good enough to be taken seriously anyways. After some time, it ended up with me saying "I do not care, I give a shit, whatever, do what you like", that type of stuff whenever they asked for my opinion. I was also bedridden and did not care to do anything because I was not allowed to have a voice about my life. What is the point of living a life if I could not preside over it?
> **R:** I see your point. Did that influence your relations to the ones you collaborated with?
> **A:** Yes. I pulled myself away. Like the child welfare worker became the child welfare cunt and my foster parents became irritating figures that I hated above anything on this earth and if they bothered me, I knew things would go bad. Eventually, I started to hit my foster parents and I was mean to them. I know that it did not play out like that because I was a bad person, but because I was placed in a situation.
> **R:** I think everyone, when desperate enough, or too many buttons are pushed can come in a situation where you do not know what to do.

A: Yes. And especially if you are under 18 years old. Because then it is kind of written in the laws that you do not have any power to decide, because adults are to preside over you. That is something you are told from a young age. And no matter what you do, you don't have a voice anyways, because adults decide for you.

R: What consequences came from your experience with collaboration with the school and child welfare organisation?

A: It made me angry at the system. Because, I saw that adults collaborated over my head no matter what I did. So "fuck the system". And then I became a criminal and a gang member instead. The reason for that was because I found a big group of other youth that thought the same thing as me and have similar experiences with the child welfare organisation, the school and the police. So, the best way to oppose to the system was to break the law. That was kind of the consequence for me.

R: Did you ever experience that adults tossed a problem to the next?

A: Yes. The end road is BUP and if there is no help there you have the police or substance abuse help services. It escalates quickly. It might start out by small means, like we test different pain expressions and see how adults react and view me. I tested everything from self-harm, eating disorders, crime, the cute, the kind and perfect girl to the asshole. I tried everything but nevertheless it ended up with alcohol. Substance abuse is the last road.

When investigating this finding, I am taken to different possible explanations and reasons to why things escalated badly, as seen in the description above. First and foremost, I interpret the relevancy of Baklien's (2009) concept of the "others" as the topic permeates the excerpt making collaboration difficult. However, the habitus of adults, meaning figures that control and decide over children, is presented by the child as something everybody knows and is taught from early childhood. This disposition influences how the child responds to the adults when interpreting that the field of interdisciplinary collaboration is a method to exercise power over children. Hence, the child's taken-for-granted assumption that adults only seek to control children, leads to strategies on how to respond and make a move in the field, which is in line with Peillon's (1998) discussion on habitus. These moves can be seen as the strategies used to discover adults' views about the child and their reactions to children's behaviour. Hence, children may test, as seen in the excerpt, the adults to evaluate whether they can trust them with their information or not. Depending on the child's observations to how their tests are being handled, set the outset for further collaboration from the child's efforts. In the narrative above, I interpret that the tests, created by the child, were not received as hoped by the adults. In turn this might have led to the spiralling into more serious strategies that started a "warfare" against adults. This warfare seems to have been lost for some time as the participant's attempts to gain more power in the field of collaboration was unsuccessful, insomuch that the child gave up the battle and turned to alcohol.

Habitus has a tendency to protect itself from change by being selective about new information that can question its accumulated information (Bourdieu 1990). I interpret that the child's taken-for-granted assumption about adults, as people who control children, led her to understand the game played in the field through this perspective. This might have made it difficult for the participant to recognise other reasons for the way that the adults made the choices they did in

the field of collaboration. On the other hand, the child may have made accurate observations and that her experiences indeed were negative due to power imbalance. Therefore, if looking at the adults, when children challenge their social status and position through diverse means such as rebelling, they may interpret children's behaviour as something else in order to maintain their habitus. Therefore, Winter's (2015) suggestion to include children in interdisciplinary collaboration to alter adults' habitus may not necessarily force an awakening of unconsciousness. Sayer (2017) argues that to change habitus, resistance must be repeatedly practised. According to my analysis, children may practice such resistance but due to the experience of continually meeting resistance, they might give up the quest to increase their social status and position.

It can therefore be seen that children may repeatedly challenge adults' social status and position, but when their attempts are not recognised or explained as something else, children may suffer serious consequences. These consequences might not only be about implementing wrong measures but also that children experience that the support system fails to address the child's needs, which can be interpreted as another form of child neglect. The significances of child neglect can be very serious (Thoresen and Hjemdal 2014). For instance, as described in the excerpt, the consequences led to gang membership and use of alcohol in young age. One may consider the research of Bessell (2011), who argues that ensuring children's inclusion can lead the child to feel dignity and self-worth. It seems like these attributes are lost when the child experience exclusion. About the concept of the "others", the habitus of adults, as people who decide over children, is not the only perspective to be interpreted. It also looks like the child see the adults as barriers to get help, leading to feelings of resentment to the degree that the child dehumanises the adults, e.g. the child welfare cunt. As mentioned in chapter 5, children desire to be treated in a human way. This may not extend to adults if children feel they exercise power over them. Therefore, when children treat adults rudely it might indicate a call for increased opportunities to participate and influence outcomes rather than what they are possible experiencing, that of exclusion or being seen as a case etc.

Something else to consider is the participant's image of the Norwegian law as a law that supports adult's power to preside over children. She thinks that it is written in the law that children have no power to decide. Therefore, the participant concludes that it does not matter what one does, adults will always decide on behalf of children and that children do not have a voice. Hence, the law is understood by the child's perspective to prevent children from being taken seriously. The UNCRC (1989), emphasises that children's views should be given due

weight according to age and maturity. However, Article 12 does not regulate children's self-determination (Søvig 2009). Combined with the Child Welfare Act, children's views are to be heard from age 7 and self-determining power strongly increased when aged 15 (Barnevernloven 1992). So why does the child think that the law prevents her from participation? This may be explained by the concept of "the best interest of the child" and when adults use the concept to exclude children from participation as a consideration to their protection (Kjørholt 2010). Children are to receive gradually self-determining power as they grow, however this, and that of being heard may be superseded by the principle of the best interest of the child (Søvig 2009). Hence, the child's experience of adults as people who work over the head of the child, meaning making decisions without including the child or collaborating without levelling to the child's understanding, may be because of unchallenged and taken-for-granted perspectives situated in the adults as thinking to know what is best for the child. Because of this, it seems like the child experiences problems with the professional care she receives as it prevents her from contributing or influencing measures. Mayall (2015) discusses how children learn that their bodies make way in the world and that children must submit their bodies to the demands of institutions. From this perspective it is possible to understand the participant in P7 "decision" to become bedridden can be understood as an attempt to withhold her body from the social world and to defy the demands of the teacher and the child welfare worker that is placed upon the child (ibid). I conclude this finding to be about children's varied tactics to challenge adult power, however, when repeatedly losing the power struggle children may be placed at great risk. It also seems like children want power to be more evenly shared. Sharing power is, as argued by D'Amour et al. (2005) a part of the definition of interdisciplinary collaboration and it seems like children agree with this. The topic of social status and position, and the symbolic capital that is conveyed to children is so far a reoccurring red line throughout the analysis.

Children's "best interest"

This finding is about how "the best interest of the child" is found, developed, established and by whom in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration. In my empirical data, the participants emphasise a perspective, based on their experiences, that adults often determine the needs of the child based on believed knowledge without consulting the child to confirm the correctness of their thoughts. Excerpt P2 highlights the issue of taking things for granted and acting on those beliefs. Excerpt P6 is about what adults must do to better understand children's behaviours and actions in order not to misinterpret them as for instance, improper behaviour and by so doing, avoid acting on predefined assumptions. The participant in P6 ties his answer to the concept of the best interest of the child and he touches upon the pitfall of stereotyping,

undermining children due to age, the issue of speaking with children about serious topics and the importance of asking questions directly to children.

> P2.
> **R:** Have you been met with suspicion and interpreted wrongly?
> **C:** Yes! I feel that adults often are very good at jumping to conclusions on what is being said. Adults have many ideas about what something means without sharing those views with us to ask if they are correct. They must confirm what they are thinking before it is recorded in their journal and is passed around and follow us the rest of our lives.

> P6.
> **R:** How can teachers learn the signs? Is it something they can collaborate about with the child welfare organisation?
> **S:** The child welfare workers are bad at this, at least the ones I knew. I am tired of it. I think that they just have to learn that children are different from one another and look for those differences. And, if you see children who are angry or bully, then ask why about their actions. Seeing a child that stands out, ask why, is the kid alone, ask why…teachers must also learn about how to ask the child questions. It is the child who keeps the blueprint. It can be nothing or it can be lots of reasons to the child's behaviour. Many people think that they cannot collaborate with children because they are not mature enough or that they cannot talk about violence or abuse. Most of the time it is because of maturity and stuff. But then I think, that that does not protect the child.
> **R:** Should schools have access to measures taken by the child welfare concerning children who are pupils?
> **S:** They (child welfare) should collaborate with the school, but then again always think about what is best for the child. However, what is the best for the child, is also a dangerous thing. Because, who defines what is best for the child? Is it the adults or is it the child? One must know what the child considers to be good and not what you think is best for the child.

Interestingly, most interpretations so far deal with adults' perspectives on children, form the views of children, and children's perspectives of themselves and their capabilities. For instance, it is mentioned that adults are good at jumping to conclusions and that children keeps the blueprint, indicating that adults cannot know things without the child's blueprint. However, not once in any of the interviews do the participants express that in order for interdisciplinary collaboration to work well, children must have their will in all matters or what they believe to be the right course of action should always be accepted by the others. What is often recognised, including in the excerpts above, is that they express the importance of adults conferring with children. Conferring with children is understood as more than consulting with children. It includes that children have genuine influential opportunities and are informed about matters that regard them (Bessell 2011). The interview participants express that adults must never assume knowing what is going on or why children do things and later use this taken-for-granted knowledge to form what is best for the child. The participants argue that they hold relevant and important information about their lives that adults must get to know it in order to create good measures. They suggest that decision-making must include both children and adults' opinions. Below follows a description on how adults show their assumptions, it also includes the topic tokenistic participation.

R: What could have been done differently?
I: It is about that thing, that they tell all their assumptions about the child.
H: Yes, and they just sit there like, "ok, is that what they are thinking".
I: You just sit there and listen, but you do not really have the right to say anything.
H: It should not start with adults telling "H is like this at school, H is like this at home and H is like that in her recreational time". There should be questions for me. What I am thinking about, what do I think is important for others to know, what is important for me forwards and that kind of things. They should be based at my thoughts and views and not the adults'.
R: Can you influence the collaboration?
H: No, we do not. It is the adults that turn to the backroom and decide on something
I: Yes, and then nothing is solved. Because I disagree. You get the opportunity to say you disagree but nothing else.
H: I feel the meetings are more like me receiving information. It was not a collaboration meeting. The decisions were already made. For instance, if I was to have more English classes or a handwriting course, it was decided. I just received a blueprint on what would happen and that was the only function

In this excerpt it is explained that adults may describe to other collaborative members, in what seems to be done in third person, as the previous example, what the child is like in other fields, e.g. the school are at home. The participants describe that they can only sit there and listen as adults may not implement them in the conversation, or that they express their disagreement just to be left with an impression that adults do not value their opinion. The participants argue that to achieve productive collaboration, the field must include children's thoughts and views and that adults should confer with children and not present a "blueprint" that children must follow which is formed by adults' assumptions of "the best interest of the child". It seems like children feel that adults are reluctant to speak with them about difficult topics, like abuse, which is in line with Kjørholt's (2010) research about this issue. They believe that this may be caused of adults seeing them as immature. Something else to ponder, do adults want to listen to children's stories (Clark et al. 2005)? It looks like the determination of the child's needs becomes based on assumptions as a consideration to the concept of the best interest of the child. However, as discussed by Kjørholt (2010), Winswold and Solberg (2010), adults may also question children's maturity because they find it is too time consuming to collaborate with them. This in turn becomes a barrier to collaboration because children are excluded. This takes me back to the interpretation about collaboration being for adults only and that children feel that collaboration is created for adults to be able to talk with each other. The passage below highlights that children feel treated as if they were all the same and call for an increased focus on individual differences. The issue of viewing children the same is a reoccurring topic in the analysis. Here is an additional excerpt to illustrate this.

P1.
R: What is "everything like before"?

L: They think that as long as children have the same diagnose, same language and stuff like that they can be treated the same. But that is very wrong since people think differently. You think so too! Adults are not the same. They also think differently, and the child welfare worker knows that from their own lives, that adults are not the same and do not think the same. That goes for children too.

The passage above is about children's perspective that adult place them in boxes. For instance, those with the same diagnoses go in one box and those who talk similarly in another box etc. It seems like placing children in boxes risks that they will receive similar treatment. I interpret that adults might use children's similarities as an outset for deciding on measures. Hence, their universalising of children leads to, what children experience as, being treated the same. This might place children in danger of not having their individual life experiences addressed. The topic of treating children the same takes me back to the finding in chapter 5, about working with people and not cases. This is because, treating children the same can indicate that the individual child is not important, being then reduced to a case. Children's experiences with adults as making swift decisions without including them is not automatically about adults wanting to place children in booths, nor explicitly exercising their power over children. However, it could be a result of having few resources which makes it difficult to take the time to collaborate with children, hence limiting the adults to act. This is explained by Baklien (2009) and Wiborg (2010) in their discussions on the concept of "the others" and working with a budget. I interpret that by trying to save time due to resources, adults may reveal their perspectives and images of children's maturity. For instance, children's perspective is that adults exclude children due to wanting to protect them. However, "protecting" children might be led by a different agenda than its purpose, namely that of saving time. It seems like when this is done, children might experience that they are stereotyped, which may lead to the implementation of wrong measures, making them vulnerable. Hence, instead of feeling protection, they experience the opposite. This is in line with the research of Sandberg (2015). It is clear from the analysis that children recognise that adults may struggle and have difficulty with conferring with children. Therefore, children emphasise that adults need to ask questions. As underlined in the previous chapter, to ask good questions the participants suggest that adults must structure their questions to not be critical or attacking.

This section started out with the topic of what is best for the child. I argue that adults might not accept children as partners in the collaborative field because they see children as vulnerable in need of protection, hence children competences and capabilities fall in the shadows. When this happens, children experience that adults act on their own perspective of what children need, failing to include the child's views.

Children as "branded" cases - society of diagnoses

In our welfare society it is our duty "*to ensure that children and young people are heard no matter the child's age, language or impairments*" (Thorkildsen 2015, p.236-translated). Even so, according to my data it seems that diagnoses are more than once used to prevent children's voices from being heard. I argue that a reason for this may be tied to the issue of diagnoses being a prominent explanation for children's behavioural issues (Idås 2015, Christensen 2014). It seems that children want adults to dig beyond their observations to discover the underlying reasons below children's behaviours. I understand this "call" to be about children's desire that adults, when performing sense-making activities in their work-related experiences, should not rely on diagnoses to explain their observations of children, as this might cause misinterpretations of children's actions that can lead to misdirected collaboration. Research has identified that typical ADHD-symptoms are closely related to behaviour seen in children who experience child neglect and abuse (Idås 2015, Roskam et al. 2014, NOU 2012:5). In addition, ADHD is a diagnose that is commonly prescribed in Norway (Folkehelseinstituttet 2016). This makes it seem like there is perhaps more child neglect in Norway that goes undiscovered due to the camouflage of focusing on behaviour as a diagnose. Anyway, viewing children as bearers of diagnoses may influence adults to look for measures that treat the symptoms of the diagnoses instead of the reasons behind children's behaviour. Hence, what is seen in this thesis, are children's attempts to be included in a greater degree to be able to influence the collaboration towards their gain.

Diagnoses can also be a presupposition or a synonym for increased money resources. In a recent case, a municipality was accused to have placed diagnoses on people without informing them in order to receive a greater budget that could be distributed on matters of interest (VG.no 2018). Prescribing diagnoses gives municipalities rights to an increased budget (Kommuneloven 1992). Budgets can come short, and prescribing diagnoses is one way to receive increased money funding (Wiborg 2010). This may motivate adults to butter up casefiles regarding children and push for diagnoses, which can be one possible explanation for the prominent appearance of issues related to diagnoses found in my analysis. One can wonder if there is a "war" over resources going on in the backgrounds; a "war" that is not visible. It is important to make the role of economy transparent, however this project has little to contribute regarding this.

Chapter 5 mentions actions that adults may do to reduce children's experiences of becoming a case. In this section the analysis will present how children become cases to be solved, instead

of collaborative partners. The quote below is rich in detail on why this may happen and the possible consequences of it, including how it may affect the child's ability to contribute in the collaborative effort.

> P2.
> **R:** If you use your voice, are you viewed as being difficult by the adults?
> **C:** I feel that I am made to be the problem and not what I have experienced. That I am viewed as a challenge. I am a case and not a child. There is a lot of focus on the case and not the person behind. It is more about what they do (referring to children). Then we identify ourselves with the opinions of the adults and if there is a diagnose too from BUP, then you also identify with the branding the adults have given you.
> **R:** What happens then?
> **C:** It makes me feel like the people that harmed me did not do anything wrong, but that I was the problem and deserved what came my direction, that something is wrong with me. Because others were not hit, so they must have done something good. That I am not capable of doing what is good and is therefore beaten. Being "branded" hurts, it hurts to talk. It becomes difficult to identify the problems, because I identify myself as the problem.
> **R:** How are your views translated as symptoms?
> **C:** Absolutely. If you have a diagnose from before, it is like "yes, you do this and that because you have ADHD, or Asperger". When you receive a diagnose, they stop asking what the cause is. They only see the symptoms and do not think about what is inside my heart. It makes me feel that adults can go screw themselves. But I stick around and keep trying to get help, but I give up a little. I want help but I want people to ask me about things.
> **R:** Have you experienced superficial treatment?
> **C:** Yes. They work with our expressions, like our language, but they do not care enough about what is inside. They kind of "Yes. Now the child does not hit, now the child does not make a fuss, now the child is better".

In this excerpt the participant experiences that when voicing her concerns, this becomes a challenge in the eyes of her adult collaborative partners. This in turn leads to the impression of being a case and not a person who has thoughts and feelings. It looks like when the informant's views are disregarded by the adults, she feels that they do not want to work with her but solve the case as they see it. This is similar to another informant who shares the importance of adults being willing to collaborate on matters that they might not think is relevant.

> P4.
> **R:** do you want to add anything?
> **I:** Yes. For me it is important that they show that they are available when you need them. That they make you feel like a person and not a case by helping you on more areas than just the issues they identify.

Excerpt P4 indicates the importance of adults being available and that they assist on more arenas than the ones they identify, to avoid making children feel like cases. By becoming a case, the attention might be spent on what children do and seek to treat their actions like the symptoms of an illness. Combined with becoming a case is the issue of having diagnoses. This is because children then risk becoming "branded" cases, a term which is used by more than one participant. The concept describes what happens to them when experiencing that adults add perspectives that are influenced by the child's diagnose to explain who they are or what their needs are.

Being a "branded" case entails that children are defined exclusively due to their diagnose(s) and this can lead children to experience that they are the problem and that something is wrong with them. It looks like children feel that they risk being prejudiced by adults when they have a diagnose. Prejudice can come in various forms as described by Phelan, Link and Dovidio (2008) when discussing the topics of stigma and prejudice. Prejudice may function to "*keep people down, keep people in* or *keep people away"* (ibid, p.358). About diagnoses, it seems that prejudice may have several functions. For instance, the participant describe that they are prevented from influencing outcomes which may be explained by adults using diagnoses to keep children "away", which risk that adults do not confer with children. This is likely to prevent the making of shared aims by the members of the collaboration. Hence, children's impression of collaboration being for adults only. Fern (2014) also argues that practitioners' prejudicial assumptions about children or childhood can prevent them from acting on children's views and assign children with a passive role. This is in line with my finding regarding children being prevented from influencing decisions when professionals view children as the problem.

In excerpt P2 the participant shares that when becoming a "branded" case can make her begin to identify with adults' views of her. This might be because the teacher and the child welfare worker function as the child's significant others as mentioned in the previous chapter (Haller and Woelfel 1972). Hence, adults' views about a child can strongly influence the child's integrity and self-esteem. For instance, as seen in the excerpt, the participant experienced questioning whether her difficult life circumstances were her own fault. Therefore, the issue of collaborating with children as "branded" cases cause barriers to effective cooperation due to adults' images of the children, possibly leading to children becoming more vulnerable, or that prejudice towards diagnoses function to keep children "down" (Phelan et al. 2008), meaning that adults use their prejudice to dominate the field of collaboration and risk placing children in the position of believing adults' views of them. Passage P2 also illustrates that diagnoses can serve as a barrier to interdisciplinary collaboration because it may prevent adults from looking for other reasons for children's actions. Hence, it seems that adults' sense-making activities evolve around the diagnose. I interpret that having a diagnose/s may not always promote good measure for a child. It seems like children with diagnoses may experience that adults use that diagnose to create measures they believe will help the child, instead of involving the child and their perspectives of their "best interest".

While preparing the interview guide, the topic and issue of diagnoses was given little weight. While interviewing, this was however, a heated subject among the participants. The topic of

diagnoses was an unintended discovery and provides great insight into children's perspectives regarding how diagnoses influence interdisciplinary collaboration. The main challenge with diagnoses from children's perspectives and experiences, is that of treating symptoms and not the underlying reasons. The excerpts below are about adults' actions that demonstrate them treating children's behaviour instead of the underlying cause of the behaviour.

P5.
R: So, the behaviour is interpreted as symptoms and measures are taken to treat them?
H: Yes. Like for instance, if you have a child that bothers other pupils and cannot sit still, then it is like "you will get a star if you manage to sit quietly". Teachers shouldn't do that but rather think "why is it difficult for the child to sit still?". Teachers should wonder about that. It is not hard to remove behaviour, like making a child sit still. The things that causes it are however, still there. There is greater attention to giving out a negative remark if you (pupil) do something wrong. Like, you are punished for coming late, instead of them trying to understand, like "oh, you are late, what is that about, did you have a bad night's sleep?". They do not try to dig behind.

P6.
S: It is positive that they learn about it (diagnoses), but it should be for the purpose of learning how to collaborate with the child in a good way. All children are different. If I have a diagnose it does not mean that I am the same as everyone else with a similar diagnose.
R: Well, I think it would be strange to think so.
S: In my situation I experienced such a wrong development. At first, I was exploited to bullying in addition to the stuff that went on at home, which no one knew about. Then things changed in grade eight. I became aggressive and started to threaten people. Then the teacher was like, "You are depressed, come let's have you checked and then you will go to BUP". They just concluded that I was depressed, but no one asked me why. They made a diagnose. You must ask why the child is doing things, what is going on. I was very afraid. However, no one asked me why I was so afraid about everything. PPT defined me as a classic victim of bullying.
R: But must the teacher and the child welfare worker be capable of catching things by reading children's feelings?
S: If a pupil is angry, there is no use in blaming the ADHD or the Asperger. One must find out why the child is angry, sad or secluded. With me they wanted to evaluate if I had other diagnoses or psychosis that the child welfare organisation, my parents and PPT is so fund of. Without including me, it was suggested by a doctor and another leader that I should be evaluated at DPS. They suspected personality disorder and psychosis.

Analysing the excerpts, shows that adults may respond to children's behaviour through reprimands. E.g. Norwegian teachers may give pupils negative remarks, which when collecting too many, a pupil's grade on good behaviour may be lowered. Good behaviour can also be rewarded, for instance using stickers as described in P4. These are not uncommon strategies that can be used by adults. When a child does not follow "standard" development, the focus turns to finding out the problem with the child. As seen in excerpt P6, the adults begin a process of examining the child to discover possible diagnoses, which seems to cause the development of the participant's aggressive behaviour. I interpret this course of action to be about adult's perspective of children as projects to be fixed (Mayall 2015, Dewey 1938, Ericsson and Larsen 1999). When professionals see children as patients, it is the children who are pathologized and not the parents or those responsible for the care of the child (Thorkildsen 2015). Hence,

diagnoses can be a strong hinder to interdisciplinary collaboration due to adults considering children as "patients" in need of being repaired, and not as children who can participate as equal collaborative partners. This shifts the whole focus of the interdisciplinary collaboration and may work to exclude children from participatory opportunities.

Diagnoses can also be used to create a scape goat for adults, which I will come back to shortly. But first, the motivation behind acquiring diagnoses are not necessarily just about finding an "illness" and then orchestrate a treatment. As mentioned, a registered diagnose may increase public sectors' budget, such as providing additional assistance in the school's classroom. Hence, pushing for diagnoses can make work tasks easier for adults as it creates opportunities made by money. However, research indicates that children with diagnoses may not experience better outcomes. For instance, Amundsen (2017) argues that children in school who has diagnoses may experience that they are viewed as difficult children by teachers and that individual learning plans may not be constructed as suggested by PPT (Amundsen 2017). Additionally, the parents who complain about their child's education may end up having the child welfare organisation reach out due to the school sending a letter of concern questioning their parenting abilities (ibid). Therefore, in light of my own data, it may seem like teachers are more capable of considering pupils' behaviour as a sign of child neglect, than what my participants think. The topic of blaming parents for a pupil's learning abilities may, however, be as much a possible explanation. By this I mean that adults may choose to toss problems to one another. This is what leads me back to the topic of diagnoses as a scape goat.

The scape goat functions to provide adults with a quick and easy explanation for children's behaviour. This saves them from further investigation or questioning their own abilities to perform their work tasks and duties. As argued earlier in this chapter, this is one of the challenges with habitus. A person's habitus will more likely steer the attention away from itself, to protect and maintain it and seek other explanations to make sense of something (Bourdieu 1990). Or, perhaps as it may be interpreted in my analysis, the diagnose has already provided the explanation, causing adults to stop asking questions and wonder about the child' behaviour and actions. It is even suggested by the participants that adults do not do this to be mean, it is just easier to do so. It looks like this can cause great ambiguity and strongly influence adults' taken-for-granted way of thinking and their sense-making activities. Consequently, children risk experiencing more child neglect, but instead of from the home, it is from the systems. Below follows an excerpt to strengthen this view and is about two participants perspectives on why adults use diagnoses to determine their actions.

R: Do you think it is about them being lazy or that they do not care, what is the reason?

H: It is a lot easier for me, if I have a friend that has ADHD, to think "yes, no, it is because of her ADHD", instead of trying to figure out the cause that lies behind. It is so much easier for me to take the elevator instead of the stairs. So, if there is a simple solution in front of me, I understand that others will take the same route.

R: Do you think teachers choose the quick exit because they want to protect themselves?

I: They might feel that it is not their job because there are so many agencies now. The child welfare organisation, BUP and the PPT. The PPT deals with concentration issues, the child welfare organisation deals with difficulties at home and the school kind of cover the education.

H: Yes. I agree pretty much. I do not think that they do not want to. Like, even I think it is scary to go into stuff like that myself. I have tried with other children and it is shit scary to ask the right questions. So, I can see that issue. I think that can be a reason for why they do not want to take responsibility, because it is terrifying.

I: Yeah, and you have that thing where they blame the ADHD and stuff. Like, you can complain the he or she did so and so, and said this and that, but then they just say "yeah, but she has ADHD". It is that diagnose thing all the time and they place so much weight on it. It can be so much more than ADHD.

H: I think most teachers know that even if a person has ADHD, the person knows how to behave. It just so much easier to blame the diagnose. That is why it was so important for me that the school did not get full insight into my life, because I wanted to be able to come to school and have a bad day without it having to be "oh, it is because of that and that diagnose". I just want to be able to be tired without all of those thoughts popping up or that people worry.

I argue that adults fail to include children and to take them seriously when they value children's behaviour as something that can be explained by a diagnose. Hence, the diagnose, as discussed earlier in this chapter, becomes a blindfold. A possible explanation for why this happens is because adults find it easier, according to some of my participants. The scape goat of diagnoses is not used because adults do not care about children or that they do not want what is best for them, but it happens because it is the fastest route to make sense of something. This is what habitus does because it enables people to make quick actions (Bourdieu 1990). Even the children in the excerpts above express that they would choose the quick route too. Participant **H** includes an example of justifying a friend's actions due to an ADHD diagnose instead of asking if something else was troubling the person. This is because it demands less work and is less messy than addressing the concern. It is also considered a less scary road, because asking the right questions may entail difficult answers. This directs the analysis to the work of Karlsen (2002) which is discussed in chapter 5. This is because taking the easy road is a strategy to avoid slime, as swimming through slime is heavier than water. Hence, diagnoses may become so prominent that adults, by not using the possibilities within vulnerability, risk failing to help children and incorporate them as collaborative partners. This does not just apply for teachers, but child welfare workers too. This is seen in the excerpt below.

P1.
R: If you raise your voice about something, are you viewed as being difficult?

L: Yes, sometimes I present a problem that is a little too difficult for their brains. Then it is way easier for them to throw the problem back at me, because then they do not have to do anything about

it. Like if I demand the plan to change or that they need to collaborate more, it easily becomes like "oh, now you are just complicating things, you do not really need this" and they dumb things down. It is not okay, at least by how I think. Adults must stop thinking that we young people do not experience things that are as important as adults' experiences.

In this excerpt it seems like when the child raises a concern, adults choose to throw the problem back at the child so that they do not have to perform additional work. In return, children might interpret this to mean that adults do not believe that children have valuable experiences worth considering. This can reduce their experiences of being treated as a human and instead feel like they are cases. Participant **I**, in excerpt <u>P4</u> and <u>P5</u> also suggest that due to the many agencies, people choose to blame each other or/and throw responsibilities over to one another. These actions can be understood to be about avoiding vulnerability or avoiding working in the condition of swimming through slime (Karlsen 2002). Avoiding vulnerability can therefore be understood to function as a self-protecting mechanism, which leads teachers and child welfare workers to choose easy solutions that spare their time and the requirement to feel the stickiness of the "slime" on their bodies caused by children's difficult life circumstances. Hence, they seek refugee within their own silos (Hall 2005). This suggests that professional identity opens for adults to make a selection of what to require of themselves, and possibly take actions to protect themselves from situations where they might feel that they risk failing due to challenging work tasks. This is also discussed to some degree by Hall (2005). The coming excerpt can be understood as adults seeking protection from their own silo. The excerpt below is about collaboration between the child welfare organisation and BUP. The participant expresses that child welfare workers too readily send children with ease to the BUP when children share severe life stories.

<u>P7.</u>
R: Is there something else we should talk about concerning collaboration?
A: I think about BUP. The collaboration between BUP and the child welfare is large. And when children tell child welfare workers things they have experienced, they think that they do not have competences to talk about those things, so then they transfer the kids to the BUP. The BUP is made to use three months to disclose a diagnose, or else you will not receive help. That is how the system is rigged.

I understand this excerpt to be about adults finding their work task to be too challenging and instead of dealing with it, sends it to the next agency to take care of it. Of course, there are legitimate reasons to involve other agencies. What I am suggesting is that sometimes adults might transfer children, not because it is for "the best interest of the child" but perhaps more to what is best, easy or convenient for the adult. However, not only might this lead to the child feeling like a case that is handed over, they might experience that adults do not even respond to what they have shared. As highlighted, when children are evaluated by BUP, they may not

experience that adults talk with them about serious topics such as abuse and violence at home (Regjeringen.no 2010). Therefore, one may wonder who actually talk with the child about these things if the school leaves it to the child welfare organisation and they in turn leave it to BUP. Hence, according to the participant's observation, having many agencies may leave the child, as a problem to be fixed, to be passed around in the system, which may open up for a blame-game when collaboration does not progress. However, as seen in the previous chapter, learning to use vulnerability, can work as a tool to see, include and cooperate with children. This ability can be seen to improve interdisciplinary collaborative efforts, find good measures for the child in collaboration with the child and increase the effectiveness of the collaboration.

The issue of passing up a "problem" can be linked to a person's professional identity and is closely tied to a professional's understating of one's responsibility (Wiborg 2005). Therefore, when children are left with the feeling that no one wants to deal with what they consider as matters of interest, this may be a result of adults knowing too little about the other members of the collaborative team. Below I present two passages that are about children's understanding of why they experience that they are passed around between agencies, and how this influences them.

> P2.
> **R:** Why do you think your teachers did not do anything, what are your thoughts?
> **C:** I think that adults feel that "well, other adults will take care of this", and that they tell themselves that "this is not my responsibility, others will take care of it" and then the responsibility is just passed around.
> **R:** Have you noticed whether the child welfare thinks so too?
> **C:** Yes. I feel everybody thinks that someone else will take care of this, but then in reality no one do it because everyone think others are handling it.
>
> P4 and P5.
> **R:** Have you experienced blame throwing by the child welfare and the school?
> **H and I:** Yes
> **R:** What are your thoughts on that?
> **H:** You get a little like "Take responsibility!"
> **I:** Yeah, and you get a little annoyed because they want you to be responsible but then they are not capable of doing it themselves.
> **H:** And these are adults that we look up to. They kind of are the only positive adults we have in our life and then they act like that. What kind of adults will that shape us to be?

In excerpt P2 the participant describes that adults believe others will take care of matters as an excuse not to deal with an issue. Another explanation she presents is that adults think that the issue is not their responsibility to solve. In excerpt P4 and P5 the participants share their frustrations about the adults, who they experience to place a moral pressure on children to be responsible, but in return avoid taking responsibilities themselves. They explain that their collaborative adult partners are people that they look up to, who perhaps are the only positive

adults in their lives, and that they will influence who they will grow up to become. Hence, when they feel that adults toss a problem, or leave the issue unresolved thinking that others will handle it, this may cause children to feel that the adults do not really care about them. An even greater danger, is that problems, struggles or important issues in the child's life are not resolved as they slip through the fingers of all the agencies responsible for them. It seems that taking responsibility is not only about money and resources but is also a matter of professional identity, and how adults view each other. This in turn may harm the collaboration, especially if some adults feel that other adults leave it all to them, as Hall (2005) discuss on the topic of role-blurring. By looking at what adults do in practice, it can say something on their understanding of their social mandate and their professional identity. It seems that the tossing or ignoring problems may cause ambiguity, which affects the synergy of the collaboration from the perspectives of children. The excerpt below presents a participant's interpretation of adults that struggle to cooperate with each other, not necessarily due to their social mandates but because of images towards one another.

P7.
R: Okay, is that because of the law?
A: It is because the child welfare thinks the school is bad at collaborating with them. But the school also think that the child welfare collaborates badly with them too. I have heard so many stories of this.

From this passage it seems that children have the impression that teachers and child welfare workers meet issues when having to collaborate due to their image of each other, which is very much in line with Baklien (2009). I find it difficult to identify where adults may draw the line for what they consider to be their responsibilities or not, since the empirical data provide little information on the subject. In addition, the extracts above do not define whether adults blamed other agencies for not resolving issues when being alone with the children or when in collaborative meetings. Even so, blaming others or failing to take responsibility in the eyes of the children, can be understood as a strategy where adults use their professional identity to excuse themselves from issues that children feel must be dealt with. Hence, the use of Baklien's (2009) concept of "the others" may serve as a defence mechanism that adults use to explain bad outcomes or relieving themselves of extra work. Whether this is a decision made at an individual level or if it suggests serious challenges at a systemic level, is a topic I will not delve as my data cannot answer this question. Hesjedal et al. (2016) argues that children who experience that when diverse professions struggle to work across the borders of their profession may cause children social exclusion. As mentioned in other places in this chapter, I identify that children, in many instances have ended up feeling like castaways due to their experiences with

collaboration. Hence, social exclusion is a real danger when adults meet barriers to collaborate with each other and the child.

The following section will focus some more on the topic of viewing children as sick or as too vulnerable to function "normally". Diagnoses may contribute to adults forming a perspective that children are incapable of knowing what can improve their wellbeing and ability to contribute. The excerpts below introduce two participants' experiences with being treated as sick when they themselves thought they were not, and how adults may jump to conclusions too quickly. In excerpt P6 the participant was evaluated and informed to have a hint of Asperger by professionals. However, after requiring his case files he discovered that the adults contemplated and suspected serious brain damage which might have led the participant to invent that he was sexually abused. Discovering this view, provided the participant with an explanation why he felt that he was treated to be sicker than he was, and why he was not believed by adults. The second excerpt also highlight the issue of focusing on the child as being sick.

> P6.
> **R:** Mental health issues is something I feel is a sensitive topic.
> **S:** After the examination I was told that I had a hint of Asperger and nothing else. However, I recently acquired my records, and I discovered that it was written that they suspected brain injury. Not what type of injury but that it was located in the memory section and that I might have lost memories which could have caused me to make up the story of sexual abuse. I was like, what are they thinking! Why does no one dear to risk their job for children.
> **R:** How did this affect the collaboration?
> **S:** Well, I was treated sicker than I was. It affected my case and a lot of other things including the way I was treated. It forcefully placed me in situations that I disputed in the collaboration.

> P7.
> **R:** So, when did you sense that they had a seedy view on you?
> **A:** When they saw me as sicker than I was. Like, "oh no, the child has experienced violence, sexual abuse, child neglect and child have PTST, ADHD and ADD." So, they saw me as sick and they were looking for treatment options or how to address behavioural issues so I could fit into the society, or whatever. That perspective is so dangerous, because it makes you view me as an incomplete person…the child welfare organisation must see us like other children, that we are humans that learn, who explores and are worth knowing. Even if we have experienced painful things, that does not automatically make us more vulnerable. It means we have extra experiences that can be turned to something useful if adults teach us.

There is a strong indication, when interpreting the excerpts above and the one placed in the appendix, that diagnoses or difficult backgrounds can shape adults' images of children, as individuals that malfunction, who are sick and may/should be pitied, which might lead to victimising children. Consequently, this may prevent children from sharing their perspectives and experiences or that their contribution cannot influence the measures made, as their insights are made invalid due to their diagnoses or background experiences. When this happens, children's symbolic capital may be reduced because adults might view them as too incompetent

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to contribute. That professionals may place children as incompetent, is an issue that is also presented by Fern (2014). It is likely that children's ability to refuse to conform to adults will kick in when they experience that adults do not include them in decision-making, as presented earlier. Hence, a well-functioning collaboration might be prevented as children will seek to prevent, stop or oppose decisions made, based on the views that they are sick. Again, this in turn might influence adults to look for a scape goat when children's cases are difficult, enticing adults to choose an easy way out or a quick exit. There is also an indication that adults might assume that children should and will go along with adults' understanding of children needs. For instance, in the excerpt below the participant learns that voicing a disagreeing opinion is viewed as not collaborating.

> P7.
> **R:** What does collaboration mean to you?
> **A:** The way I learned about collaboration was that my foster dad made rules, and then I came and said I did not want to agree on this, and then it came "Please A, just collaborate".

I choose to include this excerpt even though it is referring to a foster parent and not the professionals, because this specific passage was short and straight to the point. However, other informants also describe that they experience that the adults expectes them to oblige to the adults' views and conform. I analyse from passage P7 that adults taken-for-granted perspective is that children should conform to adults' power. This is something that Sandbæk (2002) suggests can stem from how adults view children as dependent on them, which grants adults to use power and manipulation over children. I argue that such a perspective, if present in the interdisciplinary collaboration, can have a negative influence, define children's status as a collaborative partner and creates barriers for cooperation. The excerpt above also suggests, as discussed in chapter 2, that people describe different definitions to what it entails to collaborate.

Going back to the topic of being victimised, viewing children as sick can make the child feel like it does not belong, that they are society's "trash". Children interpret adults' actions when they collaborate. The danger of children's sense-making activities is that adults' views of them may be interpreted as "truth" about who they are. Hence, children may start to identify by adults' descriptions of them or children's perspective of what adults' think of them, based on adults' actions. This might function or be a source to breaking down children's self-esteem, dignity and desire to be a normal child. As recognised in chapter 5, keeping children's self-esteem and dignity is important and can be accomplished through participation (Winswold and Solberg 2010). When children are deprived of defining who they are to their collaborative partners, they risk feeling that they are broken and become adults' projects to be fixed, which is discussed by Mayall (2015). This might also prevent them from experiencing that they are

valued as equal beings to that of the adults. In addition, they may start to believe that something is wrong with them and begin to play the role accordingly to how they feel they are viewed. Below follows an example.

P7.
A: I had this fragile and breakable teacher who looked vulnerable. So, once I said out loud in class "Fucking hell". The teacher yelled at me and said, "A, I do not like hearing those words, do not do it, and do not say stuff like that". I just replied, "Well, I am a foster child and I do not like it when people say mom and dad, but I have to listen to it anyways and bear it. Therefore, you must handle me saying shit because that is an ordinary word". The teacher was like "what can I reply". I saw the teacher's confusion. I was such a brat ha-ha.

The participant in the excerpt above has adopted the role of being the troublemaker. This participant has accumulated several roles at different stages and years with interdisciplinary collaboration. Often, they can be interpreted as challenging adults' authority and power. However, the role as a troublemaker is not just for play but can be understood as an adopted behaviour, possibly caused by how she has understood adults' views of her. This interpretation might be a long stretch; however, I find it worth considering. Instead of viewing children as victims, children suggest that though having experiences that other children may never experience, they would like to turn these experiences to something useful and not become more vulnerable. To achieve this, children express that adults in the collaborative team must consider them as any other child, who learns, who explores and as someone worth getting to know. In sum, this suggestion leads back to participation which includes the importance of relations (Backe-Hansen 2016).

Turning to the title of this section "Children as branded cases", adults must recognise that children with a similar diagnose(s) are different people who construct their lives individually (James and Prout 2015). Diagnoses might not only make children feel like cases but become a possible barrier to communication as actions become based on assumptions. According to the empirical data presented above is seem like the children repeatedly feel that there is a profound lack of communication between children and adults. Hence, diagnoses or "branded" cases influence adults' perspective of children as the "others" leading to a possible great stumbling block to fruitful cooperation. Judging a book by its cover does do not serve the book justice and I argue that adults have a greater responsibility to open the book than children have towards their adult team player due to their right for protection (UNCRC 1989). In sum, it seems like diagnoses can become adults' crutches to lean on when they do not understand children's behaviour or do not want to deal with it.

Building, maintaining and developing good relations

This part of the chapter presents and discuss issues that may prevent good relations between adults and children. I will focus on possible barriers that reduce feelings of safety, trust, respect, cause power relations and exclusion in the interdisciplinary team. It looks like how the collaborative partners get to know one another will influence the building of relations. There seems to be steps that can be taken to maintain good relations. I include this finding as bad relations are likely to threaten the productiveness of the collaboration. This is because negative or poor relations between collaborative partners may create a gap between them, which gap is replaced by images of on another that can cause ambiguity and assumptions. In turn, this might result in a misdirected collaboration and power struggle between the members of the collaboration. I begin with presenting children's views on adults getting to know them through casefiles. Both the school and the child welfare organisation keep records of children, which can include detailed descriptions about the child. These are often read prior to a responsibility meeting and encouraged as it is believed that this will help adults be prepared and meet children with flexibility (Regjeringen.no 2009). Hence, the adults have an opportunity to get to "know" the child before building relations and before the child meets the adults. Children have strong views about this procedure.

> P3.
> **R:** Have you noticed that the adults try to get to know you?
> **E:** It was clear that they had read my file before meeting me, but they were openminded and did not use the file as a blueprint to who I am. They were more interested in getting to know me rather than judging me from the file. But reading the file is wrong. You can get a wrong image and it is like a book where you get one impression and that becomes the blueprint. You might misinterpret me when you read. No…one should absolutely talk with the person first and then read the file after.

> P2.
> **R:** Teachers and child welfare workers are often introduced to a child through file notes. How does that affect your collaboration?
> **C:** In journals and files it is written adults' interpretations of me. If they have read them on beforehand and arrive with them, this creates images of who I am based on those notes. That is wrong. Then you only know me by how other adults have known me, and not how I know myself.
> **R:** Should there be any rules for reading the file?
> **C:** In the beginning there should be a procedure that prevents them from reading it before the meeting. And ask the child if it is ok to read it. Some children dislike having to share their story repeatedly. But you must ask children if they want to tell you or that you should read it.

All the informants oppose to adults having access to children's personal files either in the school or kept by the child welfare organisation, prior to meeting the child in a collaborative setting. As seen in excerpt P2, it is explained that when adults use casefiles about children to prepare for collaborative meetings, they risk interpreting what type of child they are going to work with, hence make strategies based on a personality that might not be in coherence with how the child view's herself. It is also indicated that children do not feel accurately represented in the files

about them. For instance, excerpt <u>P7</u> in the appendix found under the same heading of this section, highlights that only children's negative actions are recorded in the files and not their positive actions or behaviours. I included excerpt <u>P3</u> to show that even though the participant met openminded collaborative partners, he noticed that they had read his file prior to meeting him. Even though this did not explicitly cause negative barriers to collaboration, he shares that he feels this is wrong. Hence professionals' preparations seem to be experienced by the participants as ethically wrong and that such efforts do not necessarily promote adults to be flexible and instead may cause barriers to collaboration. It looks like children are afraid that adults might create wrong images of who they are and experience that it is ethically wrong to get to know someone when already having read possible biased descriptions about them. Participant <u>P1</u> shares below that adults were "taken off guard" because of meeting a personality they did not expect.

<u>P1.</u>
R: Do the adults in their collaboration with you have premade thoughts about who you are that can be damaging for the cooperation?
L: I suddenly had to go to a meeting, and then they said, "do you know what, we have prepared for a totally different type of person, a person that is shy, depressed" and stuff like that. But when I arrived, I smiled, which took them by surprise. This was because she had talked to someone else about me.

In line with my findings earlier, about children that may lose the chance to identify themselves to their collaborative partners, getting to know children through casefiles risks placing them in the same situation. The outset of building relations may therefore begin with children seeking to redefine adults' perspectives about them. However, this might not always be possible. Especially, as shown earlier in this chapter, when children only have tokenistic participation, including sitting through meetings listening to conversations about oneself in third person and not being conferred before the end of the meeting. This means that adults may base their whole collaboration on presumptions they have about the child. However, as found in excerpt <u>P3</u>, the anecdote for this "wrongdoing" from children's perspectives, is for adults to remember to practise openness and seek ways to truly get to know the children. Therefore, it is only logical for me to move on to the issue of how adults can get to know children. I will here present that children call for creative efforts and the importance of comfortable spaces to get to know them. The excerpt below introduces perspectives children have regarding how adults can contribute to building good relations.

<u>P2</u>
R: How can a teacher and a child welfare worker offer more of themselves to create better collaboration with you?
C: By leaving the box. Do the little extra, instead of sitting in the office. Go out, do something that the child likes. Go to a place that is more natural than the office.

R: Is there something that can be that "little extra"?

C: For instance, a car trip with music where I can to talk through the music. Because then everything becomes clearer. You will get more out of the songs than I can express. At least in the beginning. So, if I could be the "DJ" in the car and share my songs and tell you what I feel about them, you could get to know why I like the songs and their lyrics. I relate to the music I listen to. My psychologist let me do this and I wish that the school and the child welfare organisation would do so too. I could like show a song in the beginning (of a meeting) and a song at the end and then explain.

R: Would you say that visual tools in general, like a video, would work?

C: Yes, I think so. It would have been very nice if there had been more openness for it. Because it would have led to me being able to explain much more than I can in the beginning. It can also open for sharing an interest or that I get to share mine with the others. It feels safer when they receive my interests and my wishes.

R: So, do you think that today's practise is a bit one-sided?

C: Yes. I feel everything goes on one-tracked.

This excerpt is about possible options that adults could apply to get to know children and alternative ways that they can invite children to participate. It is mentioned in excerpt P2 that the participant would have loved to communicate through music and that her participation could be based on songs combined with her own thought explaining the song choice. I want to highlight the importance of providing creative options for children to participate. Even fun ways to participate. Backe-Hansen (2016), argues that participation can and should be fun, rewarding and educational. However, she shares that for this to be possible, relations must be in order (ibid). This amplifies the importance of having good relations between collaborative partners. The participant argues that by being able to use music, she can better express her thoughts, feelings and ideas. Being able to participate is believed to be positive for children as it has the power to increase children's experience of being heard, seen and increase self-esteem (ibid). I interpret that by implementing creative measures for participation, children can gain an increased position in the collaborative practice in line with the arguments of Backe-Hansen (2016). It is also highlighted in the excerpt that it would be good for the collaboration if it took place in whereabouts that children also feel comfortable. It can be understood that adults' workplaces, such as their offices, is their comfortable space but not necessarily the child's. The participant in excerpt P2 has earlier in the interview described adults' offices as egg white and sterile and indicate that it is not a natural place where she would talk about painful experiences. Like researcher, it seems that teachers and child welfare workers can benefit from being aware of physical locations they choose to perform collaborative practises with children (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The issue of physical locations is also discussed by several informants but one of them also mentions that the adult's office can be a nice place to talk. The excerpt below shares how.

P4.

I: She had this cute office with lots of pictures and stuff.

I find it possible to link the sterile vs the personal office to the topic of children feeling that adults are involved. I make this connection based on the observations that has been made regarding how children like seeing adults' feelings and the following finding that will soon be presented. It seems that for collaboration to work well, children would like to experience adults as interested in them, warm approaches and becoming involved as described in chapter 5. It looks like the opposite would be the sterile egg white offices combined with adults who seek to remain professional through the measures of not showing emotions or getting involved. The following excerpt illustrate my interpretation.

> P6.
> **R:** What expertise should child welfare workers have?
> **S:** You have does child welfare workers who when speaking with children, are likely to sit there with their legs in cross, look serious and do not show emotions.
> **R:** What role does the adult's bodily language, voice and warm eyes have when working with you?
> **S:** It plays a part in my safety. If you stand there and look dead serious and do not show your feelings, then it makes me feel unsafe. Or if you get agitated, then it quickly makes me feel unsafe. But I am swiftly worried of little things because of what I have experienced.

In this passage, the participant expresses the issue with adults not sharing emotions and how body expressions can influence negatively. It can be read that the participant felt unsafe when he did not get insight into what the adult were thinking. Other informants share similar opinions and adds that adults should enter a room ordinarily, speak normally and not make things feel uptight[51]. The excerpt below describes that children may not like to share their experiences and feelings unless they feel that adults meet them with affection and care.

> P4
> **R:** What role does the adult's bodily language, voice and warm eyes have when working with you?
> **I:** Well ha-ha, that plays in on everything really. If you come in as a new teacher in our class… and not smile and act coldly... It becomes like "who the hell does she think she is". And for me that plays in on whether I want to tell you about problems at home or if anything has happened or being bullied at school. I must know that you are a safe person to turn to and therefore body language and warm eyes come in. It matters that you show that you are a safe person.
> **R:** Do you want to add anything?
> **H:** No. I agree.

It seems like children's dislike of sterile offices may not be too problematic when collaborating with adults that they feel care about them. For instance, by having an affectionate body language and sharing their thoughts with them. However, when sterile offices are combined with adults who find their professional care to be about remaining distant by not offering insight into what they feel and think to the children, for instance about children's stories, the office becomes a bigger problem. As a result, children might feel that it is unnatural to talk about their experiences. I interpret that children desire increased opportunities to build meaningful relations

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[51] See excerpt P1 in the appendix under same heading.

to their adult collaborative partners as long as they do not become burdensome to the child by adults sharing too much personal information. Why children meet varied practise regarding adults and if they speak "freely" or not, can be tied to adults' perspectives on children. I find it difficult to imagine that adults purposely choose actions to make collaboration more difficult for children, however, this might happen too. What I do interpret is that having a "warm" or "cold" approach to children when building relations can be about what adults think children need and what is best for them. However, the participants vividly express that adults must put words on what they think and feel when children share difficult stories. This is highlighted below.

> P2.
> **R:** What does child welfare workers need to get better at?
> **C:** They must know how to react normally when sitting with a young person. It is allowed to show emotions. Both in child welfare and in mental health agencies, adults have left the meeting to go to the backroom and cry to their colleagues over stuff that has been shared. But us kids, we notice when something is wrong even before people get choked up. So, if you start to cry, then explain why.
> **R:** Do you think that children can deal with seeing the adults' feelings?
> **C:** Yes! Because that teaches us what we should feel about the situation. Many of us mix how we should feel. Like we get angry when we are sad. We have expressions we use because we have not learned how to react to those feelings. It is important that we learn them from somewhere. So, it is good if adults that work with us teach us how we should react to things that has happened to us and that what has happened should not have happened. And if you are not a crying person, then explain that it pains you to hear what is being said. Because then we can also understand and get knowledge that what happened to me should not have happened.

The participant argues that if adults do not show what they think or feel about what children share with them, they might not learn themselves how to feel or relate to what has happened to them. I interpret that they long for good role models. In addition, it seems that it can make them feel unsafe when adults leave the room to for instance, cry. It looks like this pushes the setting of collaboration to become unnatural and that building good relations is prevented. When children are prevented from building relations with professionals, it also promotes their image of adults as people who descends from their "thrones" to help children. In other words, asymmetric relations are presented as strongly disliked by children and they use several sense-making activities to create this image of adults as being above children. For instance, that of having children to share their stories but remaining distant themselves. Other ways this image is created, is by how children interpret adults' apparel, collaboration as forced, of ganging up with other adults or actions that are considered rude. The excerpt below presents the issue of apparel and why it can influence to asymmetric relations. Examples of the other issues will follow.

> P7.
> **R:** Is there something else that is important?

A: To be able to apologize and not dress like you are so important. Like, put on casual clothes. You do not have to meet me in a blazer and a pencil skirt with black tights and click clack shoes. Dress like yourself. That is an important part of being humble. Because then you do not show that you value yourself higher than us. You view yourself like us and that we are humans together, that meet together and will find out stuff together. Not like you are a person "high in the system bitch" that comes down to us to help us and pull us out of the underground to create a new life for us and fix everything. But that we will fix things together.

The participant presents how attire can make her feel less valuable than adults. It seems like what one wears become an issue because the child place symbolic value upon adults' clothing. Hence, formal attire means something to the child. It also promotes "otherness" as the adult and the child dress differently. I interpret that such perspectives towards clothes is tied to children's experiences with asymmetric use of power, like the issue with comfortable spaces. Therefore, the clothes themselves does not necessarily mean anything bad but because of interpreting that adults exercise power over children, the clothes begin to carry symbolic meaning. What is also revealed in this excerpt, is that children find it problematic when interpreting or experiencing that adults come to fix their problems or as seen earlier, when children are viewed as the problem. This impression also leads children to feel that adults "come down from their throne", possibly causing the collaboration to start out with the image that adults has descended from a pedestal and are more important than children. In sum, clothing can serve as a representation of status, position and power. Therefore, when meeting adults, children's impression of clothing can cause an experience that the adults are important people, more so than them and that the workers attire sends a message of who they are and what they can do because of their line of work. This image is then amplified when children experience interruptions from adults such as requesting a break from the meeting.

P1.
R: Do you have any similar experiences with the child welfare organisation?
L: They can say, "do you know what, I need a break", but they say it right in the middle as I am talking. That is so rude!

In this excerpt, the participant shares how she is sometimes interrupted when being in the middle of conveying information, because the adults want a break. The participant feels this is a rude behaviour, not waiting until a natural intermission in the conversation. I find this example to demonstrate how children may relate to asymmetric power relations. This can cause the child to feel below the adults, producing possible hierarchies in the collaboration. As seen in chapter 5, feeling equal to one's collaborative partners is important. However, achieving this can be difficult, for instance adults may not dare to oppose each other. Another issue is that of ganging up which may exclude other/s from the collaboration. I identify that children sometimes

experience that adults may side with each other, or that the child sides with an adult against another adult. This can be read in the passages below.

> P1.
> **R:** Can you describe what you consider as bad collaboration?
> **L:** The worst thing I know is when the school and the child welfare organisation team up against me, that they agree with each other and run a plan outside my control. I have experienced that a little.
> **R:** Which partners quarrel and what do you think when it happens?
> **L:** Sometimes I gang up with one of them. Sometimes them against me etc. And sometimes one of them can talk on my behalf because I cannot take the fight that day and get really tired.

It looks like, from this passage, that interdisciplinary collaboration can turn into a pretend "democracy" where the majority wins the course of action instead of creating shared aims. Therefore, the collaborative members may seek to get people on their side. This can create a deceived impression that all the members are heard. However, this may only serve as a false pretence and that in reality, children are likely to fall prey for the dominant actors of the field of collaboration. I make this interpretation based on the work of Sayer (2017), who uses an example of women as dominated by men due to their gendered upbringing are already pre-disposed to submit, serve or comply to men and men to command, lead and expect compliance (Sayer 2017). In the same way children might experience that there is an expectation from adults that they are to comply to them due to their responsibility to care, protect and educate them. However, adults themselves might have a habitus that they indeed are to decide/preside over children and that children should comply, which may serve to place children's rights in the background. Falling "prey" to the adults as dominant actors may also be about capital, which is presented by Bourdieu (1993). This is because adults are likely to possess knowledge that can be used to dominate the field of collaboration. The issue of "ganging up" may happen due to structures of hierarchy. I have analysed that the participants may feel that teachers often sides with the child welfare workers. This has been explained to be about teachers being too scared to oppose the child welfare worker due to the child welfare worker being at the top then the teacher and the child at the bottom of the power chain. A brief example is presented below about this hierarchy chain.

> P2.
> **R:** So, you think that there is a strong hierarchy in the collaboration and that you are at the bottom?
> **C:** Yes. I am at the bottom of the food chain
> **R:** Who is at the top?
> **C:** The child welfare organisation.

Analysing the topic of taking peoples sides from the light of hierarchy, I understand children's perspectives to be about teachers following the lead of the dominant leader of the field of collaboration. This might be because of teachers less descriptive an undefined guideline on how to collaborate with the child welfare organisation as emphasised by Hesjedal et al. (2016). I

interpret that when children are siding with an adult, they may attempt to have the collaboration go in a preferred direction they desire. Hence, this can be seen as a type of power struggle to get pass the barriers of asymmetric use of power. This in turn may lead to exclusion of collaborative partners, which might then turn into negative images of each other. When hierarchy influences the team efforts, individuals might experience that their contributions are not equally valued and therefore they are to a degree silenced. I have interpreted that child welfare workers due to their social mandates have more power to decide over children's lives than teachers. It seems like children have the same perspective; however, this does not prevent them from trying to reclaim their status. The passage below demonstrates this.

> P1:
> **R:** Does that have to do with your view on dignity and how it should be equal to the adults'?
> **L:** Yes. Because if I feel left behind, and I am not a person that like to be stepped over by people, then I would rather destroy. Have more respect.

The participant in this passage shares that she would rather destroy the collaboration than having adults reduce her social status and position and states that respect must be practised. When professionals take sides against the child, this may lead to experiences of forced collaboration by the child. When analysing the interview data, I found that children feel that forced collaboration not only makes good relation difficult, but it may create barriers to find solutions together which might then result into children seeking ways to reclaim control over their lives. Forced collaboration includes collaboration where children feel they are required to do something as their part of the collaboration and cohered to oblige, otherwise negative consequences will follow. This excerpt also supports my interpretation above about children being supressed to adults as dominant actors in the field of collaboration.

> P1.
> **R:** Can you describe what you consider to be a bad collaboration?
> **L:** I feel when there is a forced collaboration, like when they say you have a choice but really, you know that you do not have any option. So, when you say you do not want to do it, they say you might fail your class and stuff. Use bad consequences. So not having a real choice is the worst.

Forced collaboration may happen if adults prior to the collaboration have decided upon a plan or strategy that they present and enforce when members of the collaboration come together. When not conforming to their part of the given responsibilities in the collaboration, adults might threaten to the use of negative consequences against children. As presented, children seek ways to oppose collaboration they do not agree with, but if adults stand their ground too sturdy, children might give up the battle. In one way, children describe that they want collaborative partners that are role models and even becoming motherly. However, when the role models want children to do something because adults may think that is best for them, children do not necessarily want the adults to remain a "mother figure" who decides. Instead it looks like they

want professionals to take a step back from being involved and use their professionality to maintain an equal balanced use of power and influential opportunities. I believe this is a balance that may be challenging to practise as one's habitus may lead people to many taken-for-granted sense-making activities, including that adults may think to know what children need. Children might also feel obligated to take the help presented to them instead of choosing another course of actions due to lack of knowledge of other options. Therefore, it looks like children suggest that adults should provide more than one option. This must of course be done in line with the law that states that adults must work with the child's maturity and competences.

Information flow – confidentiality and discretion – keeping trust

Backe-Hansen argues, "*It is a common knowledge that children and young people must trust the person they are to open up to*" (Bakce-Hansen 2016, p.45). This part of the chapter will deal with the topic of confidentiality and children's perspectives on how it is used. I will also discuss somewhat on the topic of ambiguity. Some of the participants shared that fear was felt when letter of notification arrived in the mail that they would soon be contacted by the child welfare organisation. One participant expressed that he did not expect that collaborating with the school would go well based on images he had created about the educational system as a pupil or with the child welfare organisation due to what he knew about them. Fear and distrust seem to be major concerns presented by the participants.

> P3
> **R:** So, you received a notification that the child welfare organisation would reach out and how long did it take before anything happened?
> **E:** About 3 to 4 months before stuff happened. So, in the beginning it was only fear and stress about what would happen…and you hear from others what they have experienced or stuff they have heard and then it just piles up and makes you even more afraid. The letter should have clarified more so that unnecessary misunderstandings does not happen.
> **R:** What made you think this will not work?
> **E:** I had heard a lot of nasty things about the child welfare organisation from before, and the school system is not the world's greatest either, so you expect that when they are teamed up it will not work well. But then I gave it a shot and because I was lucky with the adults, it worked well in my situation.

In the passage above the informant shares that he feared the child welfare organisation and distrusted that teachers and child welfare workers would collaborate well together. This view was however based on images he had created about the two sectors. I interpret that the child, due to being exposed to a collective habitus about who and what the child welfare organisation is, fear was created. For instance, as presented in chapter 2, negative views about the child welfare organisation are roaming around in media and people's opinions. Images about others as presented by Baklien (2009) can have negative impact on collaboration. This is seen by how the informant entered the collaboration with a view that this would not work out. Hence the

start line of the collaboration begins negatively for the child. When combining the child's views, with possible adults' views of the child and the other adults, it seems like the collaborative partners can be caught in a web of ambiguity and ideas about each other before combining expertise, causing a possible danger of their sense-making activities being based on negative views. This may risk that when courses of actions leave in a direction that may seem to be in line with the premade images they have formed; power struggle may arise and lead to barriers of a productive collaboration. Other participants also highlight that trust has already been broken prior to the collaboration. For instance, by how the duty of disclosure is dealt with by teachers.

> P7.
> **R:** Does teachers have a good understanding regarding the law of confidentiality?
> **A:** Yes, but they do not explain what it means for us. They just say, "If you want to tell us something, we obey by the law of confidentiality". They do not explain that they can send letter of concern to the child welfare without us knowing. Or if we tell something they can call our parents and share what we said.

In comes out in this excerpt that children experience adults are well informed about confidentiality but that the duty to disclose is not well enough explained to children. The participants account diverse practices on how the duty to disclose was used. Most experienced that it happens without their knowledge or being talked to about how it could be done safely for them. This indicates what has been mentioned earlier, that teachers may have too vague guidelines when it comes to how to collaborate with the child welfare organisation and perhaps children too. I suggest that teachers may not think much of passing information about a child to the child welfare organisation or parents, because of the age-based law they abide by. Meaning that because children are not included in for instance, school meetings before 12 years old, teacher may have taken-for-granted assumptions that talking with the child is unnecessary. When children lose control of information flow this may create insecurity and distrust. The participant in excerpt P6 below, shares about losing confidence in the person he chose to trust when information is shared without his consent.

> P6.
> **R:** The law on disclosure gives way to work beyond confidentiality and is there to help agencies to collaborate, is it in the way?
> **S:** Many times, it is. For instance, if I tell you a big secret and if you say that you will keep your mouth shut but then call directly to the child welfare organisation, I lose my confidence in you. You must explain to the child why you cannot keep the secret and ask how you can make me feel safe, and maybe use a day or three before reporting. Find out why the child wants it to be secret. If I lose confidence in adults, I will just say that I lied when the child welfare worker asks.

The informant in P6 is not the only participant who emphasises that teachers should not rush to alert the child welfare organisation. They suggest that adults take a little time to address the

issue with the child first. It looks like this increases the chances for a trustworthy collaboration and good relations between children and adults. For instance, it seems like children are more likely to participate and contribute with valuable information when trust is intact. However, when trust is broken the participant shares that he would turn to lying to reclaim control of the information. When an established field of collaboration is made, some participants share that they experience that adults talk "behind children's backs". This is noticed when children recognise that adults, whom they have not spoken to, knows things. I therefore followed up on what they thought about adults meeting without the presence of the child. The following excerpt is one of the replies.

> P4 and P5.
> **I:** You have no idea about what they are talking about…We might believe that we have done something wrong and that they are discussing a punishment. I do not know, but scary it is.
> **H:** Yes, and we have experienced that a lot.
> **I:** Yeah, because when parents talk behind our back something scary comes later.
> **H:** Many of us have experienced that adults have abused their power. When other adults do it too you lose faith, and you do not dear to tell them things. Because if you tell the teacher, he will tell the child welfare worker or opposite. It is like that with friends too. If they tell something to others without your consent, you do not continue to tell that person things. The child must be permitted the right to inform what you should know.
> **I:** Yes, and maybe you get that extra look. Adults do not often even notice themselves that they do it. But we children do.
> **H:** And if I know that my teacher knows that I live in an institution or foster home, I become very like "is she saying that because it is me, is it me she is talking to indirectly even if she is not". But if I know she has no clue then…
> **I:** It is more chill to be in class.

I interpret that children dislike adults collaborating without their presence. They express that not knowing what is being discussed causes great insecurity as their experiences in the past might have been that when adults talk without including the child, something bad may follow, like a punishment. When combining this image with the fear of the public sectors, it is not difficult to comprehend why children reason accordingly. This may prevent children from sharing with teachers or child welfare workers if something happens in their lives that may need adults' assistance. I analyse that children want to restrict who knows what about their lives, and if information is shared too freely across the borders of the sectors, they experience that information may spread like wildfire. I interpret that children want to keep the information flow in check because it can make their lives more comfortable. Passage P4 and P5 share that when children sense the adults giving them "that extra look" it can be uncomfortable, and when teachers says something, it can make children wonder if they are being indirectly singled out. This seems to cause ambiguity about adults working behind children's backs and knowledge. This can make children feel insecure and unsafe. It is strongly indicated that children want to know where information travels, otherwise they might seek out strategies to feel more protected

and may hinder collaboration. It looks like how information is used by the adults, may influence how a child would want to participate and influence in a specific situation. Since schools are an important collaborator to the child welfare organisation and increasingly sends letters of concerns to the them, it calls for a greater focus on how information is shared and children's inclusion on the topic (Holterman 2017).

When or if confidentiality is breached from the experiences of children it looks like, even if adults may have had good intentions, it functions to supress children, because they cannot practise freedom of expression (UNCRC 1989 Article 13). How professionals interpret the law on confidentiality may give way for asymmetric relations. It is emphasised by all the participants in this project the importance of talking with the children before making decisions that will influence their lives. According to my analysis it looks like when children are included to be part of the process when information must move on to other agencies or families, serve to prevent distrust, feelings of unsafety and strengthens the foundation for further collaboration. It may also give way for children to feel heard and an opportunity to influence the information flow.

I now move on to the issue of what some of the children perceive as poor discretion performed by adults which may not directly break their duty of confidentiality but might place children in vulnerable positions. The excerpts below are about preventing others from suspecting that "something is going on".

> P2.
> **R:** What are your thoughts on confidentiality?
> **C:** I was a sensitive child, and I should have been allowed to leave class instead of being forced to sit there and cry. We should be able to resign from the community because no one wants the whole school to know that you have a difficult life and that you sit and cry. I did and was bullied when other pupils found out…They say they cannot say things further to anyone else, but they do not mention parent's right for disclosure. They do not explain that they work with other agencies, like the school. It is so important that they do, otherwise the trust is broken for ever.
>
> P3.
> **E:** For instance, when I had to leave class to talk to my contact person, then the school was really good at making it seem like I did something else. That I…I don't know...went to the dentist or something. No one in my class understood what was going on. That was really nice. Because then it did not become uncomfortable to come back to the class.

It seems like, from studying the excerpts, that children want to keep their privacy and that adults should increase their efforts do provide this. For instance, when having collaborative meetings, they would prefer that adults disguised children's departure from class. In excerpt P3, the informant shared that his teacher would make it seem like he was going to the dentist if collaboration took place during school hours. In passage P2, the participant shares that she

would at times experiences moments where it became difficult to keep feelings on the inside. I believe it is common knowledge that many people feel that it can be uncomfortable to cry in front of an audience. Hence, children might benefit from having a "sanctuary" where they can retrieve to when things become difficult. In agreement with the adults, they could settle on a place where the child could be permitted to go, when at school or in a collaborative meeting that become challenging. Perhaps if this was provided for the participant in P2, she might not have experienced additional harm through bullying by her peers, which likely would have affected her school performance as well. Discretion seems to be a part of children's definition of confidentiality which includes preventing other people from suspecting or assuming things about the child regarding their involvement with the child welfare organisation. This might be because they want to be seen as normal kids. Why adults struggle with discretion from the perspectives of children is difficult to interpret. I suggest that it might be tied to adults underestimating children's ability to perceive outside the scope that adults believe they are capable of, and perhaps the lack of communication with children about their views regarding their needs.

I want to discuss the matter of believing children. In order for good collaboration to take place, it seems like children need to feel that what they share is believed by the other members of the collaboration. An issue presented by the participant in excerpt P6 below, is that adults may not want to believe children because they find it difficult to accept that horrible things are done to children in Norway.

> P6
> **R:** Can insecurity influence this, that they support themselves to the system?
> **S:** Not really. I think they just do not want to believe you, because that can be dangerous for teachers and child welfare workers. Many thinks that for there to be child neglect, the family must be like this and this. But you can have families with a high income or a good reputation that are capable of doing horrible things. And if you involve diagnoses too, then they forget to see past the diagnose.

In this passage, the participant suggest that professionals have images of the type of people who abuse children. These seem to exclude adults who are renowned or have a high income, from the perspectives of children, which is something P6 describes in the interview. He also shares that he never felt that he was believed and that adults were more taken by finding out what was wrong with him, excluding the adults that harmed him. From my interpretations done throughout the previous and this chapter children wants to be taken seriously and may experience that they are greatly reduced as a collaborative partner when they are not believed or taken seriously. It seems that adults, from the perspectives of children must find better ways to include the children they work with.

Ensuring a steady education for children

To end this chapter, I would like to bring up the topic of keeping children in school. Children risk being taken out of school for some time when the child welfare organisation enters their lives. This may be caused by various reasons. I wanted to know more about children thoughts about this issue or if it even was an issue, and how collaboration could contribute. The excerpt below is about participants experiences with losing schooling and shares a preference to keep progressing educationally instead of a temporary "drop-out". There is also an excerpt rich in detail placed in the appendix.

> P4 and P5.
> **R:** Do you have any tips to how children may not experience a waiting period before getting back at school?
> **I:** I have experienced both. I feel that if you have a waiting period, then you miss out on even more. This one year I had to wait 1 week, not even that and that was okay because then I had time to get used to the new foster family before getting to know the class. But when it gets like 2 months that is too long. Like when I moved to my institution, I had to wait 7 weeks. But luckily the school collaborated really well with me about what I could work with, what I had already learned and not learned.
> **H:** We had a teacher on the institution where I lived. Because we were not "enrolled" in school anymore. Or there were many who did not want to go to school. So, the teacher that worked there followed the same working hours as the other employees. He was a major help.

Participant **I** describes that she is not okay with missing out on more than one week of schooling when, for instance, experiencing relocation. She feels that the longer the waiting period is, the greater the risk is that she misses out on important schooling. She also explains later in the interview that she lacks knowledge in several subjects due to changing schools even as many as 14 times. This means that during her primary education which lasts for 10 years, this child has sometimes changed schools more than once every year. However, why this has happened is due to several reasons that will not be discussed here.

> P4 and P5.
> **R:** Have you gone to different schools?
> **I:** Yes. I have attended many different schools
> **H:** Yes
> **I:** I have gone to 14

Participant **H** on the other hand, shares that her institution had its own teacher. This shows that welfare services or practices for children may differ across counties as these two participants have experiences from different places. In sum, it seems like children prefer the shortest breaks possible from their schooling. I also want to mention, while shedding light on possible issues with changing schools often, another barrier to collaboration. This barrier is about the fact that children may experience being the only constant person in the collaboration. Professionals may change from time to time for instance, due to maternity leave, sick leave or changing job etc.

> P4.

> **I:** My best child welfare worker is the one I have now, and I have had 17.
> **R:** No (surprised)
> **H:** Oh, my goodness, 17? I have had 8, I think.

This seems to threaten close collaboration since children may sift through adults, hence maintaining good relations may be difficult or even impossible. This might also influence children to feel like cases as adults come and go, which is why there is a need to keep casefiles about children so that adults can speedily get up to date with the child's situation. This may then serve as a pitfall, as described earlier.

The next and final chapter will provide a summary where I wrap up the main points of my thesis. I will also present a conclusion and do so in the light of my research questions.

Chapter 7 – Summary and conclusion

This final chapter draws upon the previous chapters in this thesis. I will summarise the main findings and present some reflections before moving on to recommendations for possible future research. This thesis began as a journey to explore children's views about collaboration with educators and child welfare workers through my research questions, which have been presented as following:

> What experiences and perspectives do children and young people have with collaboration between the school, the child welfare institution and themselves?
> 5   How do children define good and productive collaborative practice and what defines ineffective cooperation?
> 6   What significance and value do interdisciplinary collaboration between the school, child welfare institution and the pupil have for the child?

I have aimed to understand and establish which experiences children have that contributes to positive and fruitful collaborative practises and which have the opposite effect, from children's perspectives. This has been accomplished by the means of a qualitative methodology and has provided valuable knowledge about children's views on the topic of collaboration.

According to my thesis there seems to be an increase of children in need of public care which suggest the importance of studying what works well within agencies that are responsible for children's wellbeing and where there might be room for improvement. It seems that interdisciplinary collaboration is a core concept that enables diverse public sectors to come together across the fields of their employment, with children, to cooperate on measures that can ensure children's rights such as the right to protection and participation. The thesis has identified relevant competences that children want adults to possess to promote effective and productive collaboration. Some of these include being able to build good relations, communicate information and create participatory opportunities.

In accordance with their social mandates, adults set out to collaborate from and about "the best interest of the child". However, this concept has shown to be problematic as the collaborative members may dispute over the child's needs to gain a better life (Winter 2015, Kjørholt 2010). For instance, children may experience that adults believe that they know what is best for the child and use article 3 to outdo article 12 in the UNCRC (1989). In addition, when settling on what is best for the child, it looks like children and adults may disagree about the means to achieve this. It seems like some of the reasons for why this happens can be tied to adults' professional identity, their views on children as competent or vulnerable and taken-for-granted

assumptions about children and childhood. As a result, the collaboration may experience several detours before reaching its shared aims or not at all. However, on a positive note the thesis finds evidence that when collaborative practises apply both adults and children's thoughts on what is "best for the child" this may lead to the collaborative members being informed, heard and given influential opportunities. In addition, the measures that are formed are more likely to achieve mutual goals, and even if not, children describe that they are more willing to try again through other means, instead of abandoning the collaboration.

Even though this thesis finds reason to believe that adults perform their best to help children, children themselves might not always agree with this. A reason for this presents itself when disclosing that professions have diverse backgrounds and social mandates which in turn influence their professional language. This professional language may create barriers when communicating across professions and with children. As a result, adults and children risk forming negative images about each other that jeopardise forming good relations between teachers, child welfare workers and children. In turn, it is interpreted that this may cause great ambiguity in the collaboration. Ambiguity is seen, among other things, to place children in a kind of a squeeze. For instance, my findings show that children do not want to be defined as a case or filed at a systemic level without controlling what information professionals receive access to, about them. Children experience that adult at times may fail to keep their privacy e.g. due to information flow, making them feel deceived and that confidentiality is breached. This might compromise children's experience of being able to practice freedom of expression and as a result, children are inclined to collaborate less. Neither do children want to experience that they are objectified and be positioned without agency, for instance, by being treated as projects to be mended by adults or that adults do not listen to them (Christensen 2002). It seems to me that children and adults' definition of the concept of collaboration is in line with each other. However, the thesis has shown that when adults do not extend their definition to include the child in the collaboration, it causes ambiguity about the child's social status and position in the collaboration. When this happens, children may seek to vanquish this ambiguity through the means of power struggle. This is received by adults by either seeking to enforce their own power due to their social mandates or to have an "*awakening of consciousness"* serving to improve the synergy of the collaboration (Bourdieu 1990 as cited in Winter 2015, p. 210).

This thesis has not intended to "trash" teachers and child welfare workers' efforts to help children who experience difficult life circumstances. It is recognised that they are most likely doing their utmost efforts, according to the frames they work with and the backgrounds they

possess when they structure interdisciplinary collaboration with children. However as presented, children experience cases which display their distrust, lack of respect and doubt towards adults and their competences. This thesis has presented that such issues can be resolved and replaced with trust, respect and feelings of safety when, for instance, children's views and perspectives are implemented in the collaborative efforts. Hence, on a long term it may be possible that all children have their experiences with e.g. distrust to be changed to trusting their adult collaborative partners when adults show that they believe in children. Believing in children seems to be a topic that is problematised. For instance, the thesis has shown that diagnoses may receive high priority by adults, explaining children's behaviours. Diagnoses may also function to dismiss children's voices by making children's stories treated as fiction or by constructing their contributions as invalid. When this happens, it threatens children's self-esteem and social belonging which is against the purpose of the collaboration. Taking children seriously is an important concept to gain access to valuable knowledge possessed by the child and to achieve successful collaboration.

Good collaborative processes, from my data, indicate that these will be more easily obtained and maintained if the professionals, with the structural power they formally possess, listen and contribute to making all members of the collaboration focus on their accountability to arrive at fruitful solutions that ensures the child's wellbeing. This thesis has identified that adults do listen to children, but this seems to be done with different intentions. Children have described that some adults listen to better include them in the collaboration, others as a "checkpoint", and some might just forget due to their busy schedule. I present that children, when feeling discriminated or not listened to may form strategies, which is also discussed by Alanen, Brooker and Mayall (2015), to prevent this from continuing, e.g. finding other adults they can receive help from. Hence, how and why adults listen to children may say something on the development of the collaboration and how professionals take responsibility for the child.

The way forward and possible suggestions

There is a strong inclination that adults recognise children's rights when investigating young people's experiences. However, seeing and treating the child as competent versus vulnerable seems to be challenging for adults to balance, and therefore children in the field of interdisciplinary collaboration may experience that adults' favour the one above the other. This places children in public care at risk of being victimised and to be treated only as "becomings" (what they are expected to become) at the expense of them also being "beings" (her and now) (Mayall 2015). It seems that this may cause children to form a negative perspective about their

adult partners and the sector/system they represent. As a result, these experiences, when shared, can possibly cause children and adults to fear the power adults receive from their social mandates, which is a paradox as it is supposed to ensure peoples wellbeing. This makes me wonder if perhaps there is a necessity to investigate how adults across professions can form better relations and understandings of each other's expertise and by so doing, reduce the issues of adults forming harmful "images" about each other and seek refuge in their own "silos" (Baklien 2009, Hall 2005). When positive experiences are shared among children, this may prevent the fear of adults and their "power" to develop, when children are summoned into the field of collaboration. However, the ambiguity behind fear and its consequences seems to be a topic that could be explored further to better understand how to prevent or reduce it in society.

This thesis also shows that adults construct children and childhood in varied ways from children's perspectives, which in turn causes ambiguity that leads children, in public care, to experience that the way they are met by adults depends completely on the individual person. For instance, the "jackpot teacher". When adding the issue of the need to meet every child on an individual basis, my findings suggest that maintaining children's rights become problematic, which risks poor outcomes from the collaboration. I am left to ask that perhaps it might be beneficial to the method of interdisciplinary collaboration if further research explores ways that professionals can become more aware of their sense-making processes and how they construct children and childhood. Hence, instead of children making adults aware of their habitus about children and childhood when placed in the field of collaboration, adults themselves can obtain other tools to do this themselves. Consequently, this might help reduce the ambiguities as identified in this thesis.

About the way forward, there are also some suggestions that stem from children's perspectives about the need to avoid risking children's educational progress. Because children in difficult life circumstances have the right to equal schooling, there seems to be good reason to investigate how to prevent children, e.g. when being relocated in foster care, from experiencing temporary "drop-out" from schools. Investigating how the educational and child welfare sector can form improved structures on at systemic level, may perhaps contribute to counteract children in public care to fall behind their peers and the consequences it might bring. Due to the national push of merging counties and municipalities, including the effort to combine competences, it seems profitable to look into how these implications influence the use of interdisciplinary collaboration between the educational- and child welfare sector at a local level. Also, the implications that follow due to the implementation of love in the Child Welfare Act seems

interesting. Badham (2004) suggested that there is a gap between the rhetoric and practice of interdisciplinary collaboration and how to cooperate with children. This thesis also finds such implications in Norwegian context. This might partly explain why public services for children differ depending on their place of residence. Hence, studying the possible consequences of merging borders within the state, may indicate how children experience interaction with adults in the field of collaboration and if this leads to more unified services for children.

This thesis has found that children value collaborative efforts and that they believe it can address difficult situations in their lives when adults provide opportunities for participation, which is in line with the findings of Bessell (2011). In addition, there seems to be a lot to learn from children's experiences about their collaboration with teachers and child welfare workers. For instance, children suggest implementation of creative ways to communicate with children, e.g. through music so that they may become better equipped to participate. However, as the title of this thesis, "Is the choir in tune?" indicates, there are ambiguities that challenge good collaboration. This project has analysed that there is a vast pool of options that could prevent interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve its potential. I suggest that knowledge about possible barriers to collaboration can contribute to improved use of interdisciplinary collaboration by professionals and thereby possibly incline better outcomes for children.

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Appendix

Appendix 1:

Receipt from NSD – research found to be in accordance with ethical guidelines

Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 07.07.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

55072	Barns erfaringer og perspektiver på samarbeid mellom skolen, barnevernet og dem selv
Behandlingsansvarlig	NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Vebjørg Tingstad
Student	Rebekka Andersen

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, rette en henvendelse angående status forbehandlingen av personopplysninger. Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen
Marianne øgetveit Myhren

Siri Tenden Myklebust
Kontaktperson: Siri Tenden Myklebust tlf: 55 58 22 68 / Siri.Myklebust@nsd.no

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Recruit letter to the Change Factory

Samarbeid

«Det nytter ikke å være en skinnende stjerne på himmelen alene»

Informasjon

Hei

Mitt navn er Rebekka Andersen og skal utføre et master prosjekt ved NTNU. Prosjektet heter «Collaboration has no Hierarchy» og handler om barn og unges erfaringer og perspektiver på samarbeid mellom lærere, barnevernspedagoger og dem selv. Etter å ha deltatt i et seminar med Forandringsfabrikken ble jeg overbevist om at Barnevernsproffer er de rette deltagere for dette prosjektet. Jeg trenger Forandringsfabrikkens hjelp for å rekruttere seks personer i alder mellom 14 til 20 år til å delta i et intervju og en gruppesamtale.

Prosjektets hensikt

Målet er å fremme barn og unges stemme, tanker og erfaringer med samarbeid mellom skolen, barnevernet og dem selv. Det vil bli tatt opp hva de unge mener er hindringer for et godt samarbeid mellom partene og hva som kan bli endret for at samarbeidspraksisen kan bli styrket og forbedret i fremtiden.

Jeg ser frem til å kunne få samarbeide med unge individer som har deltatt eller deltar som barnevernsproffer. Jeg ser på deres kunnskap som meget verdifull.

Prosjektet

Prosjektet vil ta for seg fire hovedtemaer som tar opp:

Omsorgssvikt – lærere og barnevernspedagogers kompetanse

Samarbeid mellom skolen, barnevernet og eleven

Hindringer som kan skje i samarbeidet mellom skolen, barnevernet og eleven. For eksempel taushetsplikt.

Barn og unges drømmesituasjon for fremtidig samarbeidspraksis mellom institusjonene og dem selv.

Litt om meg

Jeg har foreløpig gått på universitetet i 5 år. Jeg er ferdig utdannet lærer, men jeg ønsket å lære mer, da jeg synes at det å være lærer betyr at man må vite mer enn kun faget sitt. Derfor studerer jeg denne masteren som heter Childhood Studies. Jeg er mamma til to barn og gift med en som heter Adrian som er tegneserie artist. Jeg er veldig allsidig og liker mye forskjellig, men er nok

kjent for å like «gutteleker» som motorsykkel osv. Jeg har erfaring med rus, psykisk vold, diagnoser og annet hos familie og er derfor naturlig opptatt av at barn skal få best mulig hjelp i sin hverdag. Nedenfor finner du et bilde av meg og et bilde av kjerne familien min 😊.

Rekruttering

Som nevnt tidligere trenger jeg unge personer til å delta i intervju og senere en fokusgruppe. For at jeg skal kunne utføre prosjektet trenger jeg minst seks personer til å bidra. Jeg ønsker at deltakerne gjerne har ulik bakgrunn, men må ha hatt erfaring med barnevernet og skolen. Deltagelse er selvfølgelig frivillig. Jeg håper det er interesse for å bli med på prosjektet og at ansatte i Forandringsfabrikken kan hjelpe meg å nå kandidater til å delta. De som ønsker å bli med på prosjektet vil få gavekort for 2 til kino eller gavekort til kafe besøk, som takk for den viktige hjelpen.

Kontaktinformasjon

Lures det på ytterligere informasjon kan jeg kontaktes på

Email: roseknopp@gmail.com

Tlf: 95133853

Gleder meg til å høre ifra dere.

Dette skrivet kan gis til potensielle deltakere. Jeg har også en mer fordypende informasjonsskriv til barn og unge samt foreldre.

Med vennlig hilsen

Rebekka Andersen

Information letter and consent form for children and young people

Informasjonsbrev og samtykkeskjema for Barn og Unge

Dette dokumentet er tilpasset barn og unge i alderen mellom 14 - 20 år som har deltatt i Barnevernsproffene. Jeg inviterer dem til å delta i prosjektet «Samarbeid har ingen hierarki». Prosjektets hensikt er å utforske barn og unges perspektiver og erfaringer med samarbeid mellom seg selv, Skolen og Barnevernstjenesten.

Introduksjon:

Hei, mitt navn er Rebekka og jeg er master student fra Trondheim. For min hovedoppgave ønsker jeg å finne ut hva barn og unge tenker om dagens samarbeidspraksis mellom dem, skolen og barnevernet. Derfor vil jeg vite hva slags erfaringer og perspektiver du har om emnet. Målet mitt er å genere kunnskap som kan bedre samarbeidet mellom institusjonene og barn/ungdom i fremtiden.

Du bestemmer selv om du vil delta eller ikke. Er du under 16 år vil dine foresatte også bli informert slik at de vet at du blir invitert til å delta. Dette blir gjort fordi norsk lov sier at unge under 16 år må ha foresatte/foreldres tillatelse til å bli med i forskningsprosjekt. Den voksne som har ansvar for deg kan ikke tvinge deg til å delta. Du velger dette selv.

Hvis det er noe som er vanskelig å forstå eller lurer på i dette brevet, ikke vær redd for å spørre! Det er fint for meg å kunne forklare ☺

Hensikt og Prosedyre:

Jeg ønsker at du skal delta i dette prosjektet fordi jeg anser deg som ekspert på området. Dine meninger er viktige og kun ved å få høre om dine erfaringer og perspektiver om samarbeid, kan man få økt kunnskap om samarbeidspraksiser mellom skolen, barnevernet og deg som elev. Jeg undrer på hva som må være på plass for et godt samarbeid og hvilke ting som hindrer et godt samarbeid. Jeg vil vite hva du anser som drømmesituasjonen for teamwork mellom deg, skolen og barnevernet. Jeg tror at barn og unge vet selv hva som kan være best for dem og ved å lytte til deg, kan voksne forstå bedre hvordan å samarbeide med barn og unge.

Å delta er helt frivillig. Når du deltar kan du ombestemme deg og avslutte din deltagelse når som helst i prosjektet. Du vil bli spurt til å være med på et intervju med meg, hvor jeg har forberedt spørsmål. Intervjuet tar rundt 2 timer. Er det spørsmål du ikke vil svare på er det helt greit. Vi møtes på et sted du er komfortabel, men det må ikke bråke for mye der. Parken er et bra sted. Senere vil du bli spurt om å delta i en fokusgruppe sammen med de andre deltagerne. Dette er for å gi dere en mulighet til å godkjenne de funnene jeg har gjort. Under denne gruppen kan dere korrigere eller tilføye informasjon til prosjektet. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp på

lydopptak, mens oppsummeringen fra fokusgruppen vil bli skrevet ned. Etter 5 år vil opptaket bli slettet samt det skriftlige materialet fra fokusgruppen. Dette er universitetskrav.

Du får ikke betalt for å bli med på prosjektet, men må du ta deg fri fra jobb noen timer så dekker jeg de timene. Ellers ønsker jeg å gi kino gavekort for å vise min takknemlighet for din hjelp.

Taushetsplikt:

All informasjon du deler blir behandlet konfidensielt. Det betyr at jeg ikke vil dele din informasjon med andre. Lydopptakene vil bli lagret på en trygg plass og ingen andre enn jeg kan bruke dem. Ditt navn vil bli fjernet slik at informasjonen ikke kan spores tilbake til deg. I fokusgruppen er det viktig at alle respekterer taushetsplikten og at de tingene som blir delt der forblir mellom dere og meg. All personlig informasjon vil bli slettet automatisk rett etter prosjektet avsluttes.

Etter intervjuene og fokusgruppen skriver jeg en rapport om det jeg har funnet ut ved å snakke med deltakerne. Denne rapporten vil bli publisert som min masteroppgave. Før prosjektets publikasjon vil du bli invitert til å se den og eventuelt gi noen siste kommentarer.

Dette prosjektet er vurdert av NSD personvernombudet for forskning.

Ønsker du å vite mer om NSD kontakt: Norsk senter for forskningsdata As, Harald Hårfagres gate 29, N5007 Bergen Norway, ring 55 58 21 17 eller mail – nsd@nsd.no

Har du noen spørsmål, så føl deg fri til å kontakte meg når som helst. Informasjon står på toppen av arket. Jeg håper du finner prosjektet interessant og tar kontakt.

Mvh Rebekka Andersen

Samtykke erklæring

Jeg forstår at dette prosjektet handler om mine perspektiver og erfaringer om samarbeidspraksiser mellom barnevernet, skolen og meg. Informasjonen jeg bidrar med vil bli brukt til å fremme barn og unges meninger om temaet samarbeid. Jeg vil delta i et semi-strukturert intervju og i en fokusgruppe. Jeg vil bli gitt muligheter til å godkjenne, korrigere og legge til informasjon til Studentens forståelse fra intervjuene. Dette kan bli gjort under fokusgruppen, før publikasjonen av prosjektet og ved å kontakte Rebekka personlig.

Jeg har lest informasjonen og forstått den. Mine spørsmål er besvart og jeg vet at jeg kan stille spørsmål senere hvis jeg har noen. Jeg vil delta i prosjektet og samtykker frivillig til å bli med i prosjektet.

Deltagerens navn (blokkbokstaver)_____

Deltagerens signatur _____

Dato _____
        Dag/måned/år

Erklæring fra personen som overså samtykkesignering:

Jeg har så tydelig som mulig, lest opp informasjonsbrevet til den potensielle deltageren og til mine beste evner forsikret meg om at personen forstår at følgende vil bli gjort:

    1. personen skal delta i et intervju og i en fokusgruppe

    2. informasjon vil til alle tider bli behandlet konfidensielt

    3. deltagelse er frivillig og kan avsluttetes når som helst

Jeg erklærer at personen har fått mulighet til å stille spørsmål angående studien og disse har blitt besvart så godt som mulig til mine beste evner. Jeg bekrefter at personen ikke har blitt tvunget til å gi sitt samtykke, og at samtykke har skjedd ved frivillig deltagelse. En kopi av dette arket har blitt delt ut til deltakeren.

Personen som har oversett samtykke (blokkbokstaver)_____

Signatur av personen som har oversett samtykke_____

Dato _____
      Dag/måned/år

Foreldre/Foresatte har signert samtykkeerklæring ___Ja ___Ne

Appendix 4:
Information letter and consent form for parents or legal guardians

Informasjonsbrev og samtykkeerklæring for foreldre/foresatte

Dette skrivet er for foreldre/foresatte som er ansvarlige for barn og unge som er under 16 år, som er spurt om å delta i prosjektet «samarbeid har ingen hierarki».

Jeg inviterer ditt barn til å delta i mitt master studiehovedoppgave. Prosjektet har til hensikt å fremme barn og unges perspektiver og erfaringer angående samarbeid mellom barnevernstjenesten, skolen og dem selv. Takk for din interesse i dette prosjektet. Vennligst les denne informasjonen nøye før du velger å la barnet ditt delta eller ikke.

Introduksjon:

Mitt navn er Rebekka og er student ved NTNU. Min hensikt er å finne ut hva barn/unge tenker om dagens samarbeidspraksis mellom barnevernet, skolen og barna/unge. Jeg vet at ved å undersøke de unges meninger, kan voksne motta verdifull informasjon som kan gi økt innsikt for hvordan samarbeidspraksisen bør være. Ditt barn vil selv bli gitt muligheten til å bestemme om han/hun vil delta eller ikke. Et eget informasjonsbrev og samtykke vil bli gitt til ditt barn. Har du spørsmål, føl deg fri til å spørre når som helst.

Formål og prosedyre:

Målet med dette prosjektet er å finne ut hva barn/unge tenker for at det skal kunne eksistere et produktivt samarbeid mellom barnevernet, skolen og barna for deres velvære som elever. Det vil bli utforsket hva som fremmer godt samarbeid, hva som hindrer samarbeid og hvordan drømmesituasjonen for samarbeid er. For å kunne gjøre dette prosjektet er det essensielt at jeg får mulighet til å snakke med barn og unge som har/hatt erfaringen med barnevernet. Jeg anser ditt barn som ekspert på temaet. Jeg spør ditt barn om å delta fordi han/hun har også deltatt i Barnevernsproffene som forsøker å styrke barns posisjon i samfunnet, noe som også er min hensikt.

Deltagelse i dette prosjektet er frivillig. Men da barnet er yngre enn 16 år må du gi ditt samtykke. Om du ønsker at barnet skal delta, men barnet selv ikke ønsker er det barnet som velger. Ved deltagelse kan barnet ditt velge å forlate prosjektet når som helst. Du kan også velge å trekke barnet ut av prosjektet.

Ditt barn blir spurt om å delta i et semi-strukturert intervju og en fokusgruppe. Dette betyr at jeg under veiledning av supervisor, forbereder spørsmål som er relevant for prosjektet. Ditt barn svarer kun på det han/hun ønsker. Fokusgruppen består av at alle deltakerne møtes for å diskutere de funn som er blitt gjort ut ifra intervjuene og får så en mulighet til å korrigere, legge til og godkjenne de analyser som er gjort. Intervjuet og fokusgruppen bruker opptil 2 timer hver seg. Ditt barn kan ha med en venn om han/hun ønsker til intervjuet og vil skje på et sted hvor ditt barn er komfortabel. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp på lydopptak, mens oppsummeringene gjort av deltakerne i fokusgruppen, vil bli skrevet ned. Etter 5 år vil opptaket bli slettet samt skriftlig materiale fra fokusgruppen. Dette er universitetskrav.

Ditt barn vil ikke bli betalt for å delta. Jeg ønsker allikevel å gi kino gavekort for å vise min takknemlighet ovenfor den hjelpen han/hun har gitt meg.

Taushetsplikt:

Taushetsplikten setter krav til at all informasjon ditt barn bidrar med blir behandlet konfidensielt. Jeg vil aldri avsløre at ditt barn har deltatt i prosjektet og all informasjon vil bli lagret på et trygt sted hvor ingen andre enn jeg kan se på det. Ditt barns navn vil bli sensurert slik at materiale i publikasjonen ikke kan spores til han/henne. I fokusgruppen vil det bli lagt fokus på at alle som deltar respekterer taushetsplikten. All personlig informasjon vil bli slettet automatisk rett etter prosjektet avsluttes. Resultatene fra prosjektet vil bli publisert rundt mai 2018. Ditt barn vil få mulighet til å se en oppsummering eller en kopi av prosjektet. Du er også velkommen til å motta en kopi skulle du ønske det.

Norsk data tilsyn:

Dette prosjektet er vurdert av NSD personvernombudet for forskning. Ønsker du å vite mer om NSD kontakt: Norsk senter for forskningsdata As, Harald Hårfagres gate 29, N5007 Bergen Norway, ring 55 58 21 17 eller mail – nsd@nsd.no

Du vil få en kopi av dette arket. Føl deg fri til å ta kontakt skulle du ha noen spørsmål. Kontaktinformasjon er plassert på toppen av arket.

Mvh Rebekka Andersen

Samtykkeerklæring for foreldre/foresatte

Jeg har lest informasjonsbrevet angående dette prosjektet og jeg forstår hva det handler om. Jeg har også lest en kopi av mitt barns informasjonsbrev og samtykkeerklæring. Alle mine spørsmål har blitt besvart til min tilfredsstillelse. Jeg forstår at jeg kan forespørre meg om mer informasjon under prosjektet.

Jeg vet at:

1. Mitt barns deltagelse er helt og fullt frivillig.
2. Jeg står fri til å trekke mitt barn ut av prosjektet når som helst uten at det gir noen ulemper til mitt barn.
3. Jeg vet at datamateriale (lydopptak) vil bli oppbevart i en sikker oppbevaringsplass for fem år. Etter det vil alt bli slettet. Annen informasjon som navn og samtykkeerklæring vil bli ødelagt når prosjektet avsluttes.
4. Jeg forstår at mitt barn skal delta i et intervju og i en fokusgruppe med andre barn. Gruppen vil bli spurt om å lage rangeringsliste over forbedringer som bør skje innenfor samarbeid mellom barnevernet, skolen og barn/unge.
5. Jeg gir mitt samtykke til at studenten Rebekka kan opplyse barnevernet om informasjon mitt barn deler som er skadelig for barnet og plasserer barnet i fare.
6. Jeg forstår at mitt barn ikke bli intervjuet, med mindre mitt barn samtykker til det.
7. Jeg er informert om at det er kun Rebekka som har tilgang til personlig informasjon om mitt barn.
8. Jeg forstår at resultatene fra prosjektet vil bli publisert, men at jeg og mitt barns anonymitet vil bli ivaretatt.
9. Jeg vet at jeg har mulighet til å kontakte Rebekka om det skulle bli behov for å snakke om prosjektet eller saker som skulle oppstå fra dette prosjektet både for meg selv og/eller barnet mitt

Jeg gir mitt samtykke for at barnet kan delta I dette prosjektet.

………………………………………   (Dato)……….

Signatur fra forelder eller foresatte

Appendix 5:
Interview guide Norwegian

<u>Intervju spørsmål</u>

<u>Problemstilling:</u>

Hvordan opplever barn og unge, ut ifra deres perspektiver og erfaringer, samarbeidspraksiser mellom Skolen, Barnevernet og seg selv?

<u>Hensikt:</u>

Hensikten er å oppnå økt forståelse for;

1. hvordan tverrfaglig samarbeid mellom Skolen, Barnevernet og barnet skjer (ut ifra barnets perspektiver og erfaringer knyttet til omsorgssvikt)
2. mulige hindringer som setter stopper for eller forårsaker vanskeligheter for samarbeid mellom Skolen, Barnevernet og eleven (barn og unge)
3. hva kan bli gjort annerledes (fra alle parter) slik at samarbeidspraksiser kan bli styrket og virke til fordel for barn og unge i deres liv nå og fremtidig tid

<u>Intervjuguiden har fire hoved temaer:</u>

1. Omsorgssvikt – læreren og barnevernspedagogens kompetanse
2. Samarbeidspraksis mellom Skolen, Barneverns institusjonen og eleven (barn og unge)
3. Hindringer knyttet til samarbeidspraksiser mellom Skolen, Barnevernet og eleven (eks: taushetsplikt og opplysningsplikt)
4. Barn og unge sin drømmesituasjon for hvordan samarbeidspraksiser burde utføres mellom institusjonene og seg selv

<u>Personvern:</u>

Alle sensitive opplysninger som blir delt under intervjuet vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og all informasjon vil bli anonymisert

Takk for at du deltar 😊

<u>Introduksjonsspørsmål:</u>

Disse spørsmålene er for at både intervjuer og den intervjuede skal bli mer komfortable med hverandre. Det er en god anledning til å sette tonen for intervjuet. Ved at intervjukandidaten får snakke om sin erfaring i Forandringsfabrikken, kan intervjueren bli litt kjent med personen. Denne innsikten legger til rette slik at intervjueren kan bedre vite hvordan å gå videre fremover i intervjuet.

1. Kjønn
2. Alder

3. Din erfaring med å delta som «Barnevernsproff» i Forandringsfabrikken

Omsorgssvikt – Læreren og Barnevernspedagogens kompetanse:

Spørsmålene knyttet opp mot dette teamet har til hensikt å genere data som sier noe om hva slags kompetanse lærere og barnevernspedagoger bør ha for å kunne arbeide godt med barn og unge it ifra barn og unges perspektiver og erfaringer.

? Hva tenker du på når jeg sier ordet «omsorgssvikt»
    a. Kan du definere hva alvorlig omsorgssvikt er?
? Hvilke egenskaper og kvaliteter mener du at det er essensielt for en lærer å ha, for å kunne kvalifisere til å arbeide med barn som opplever vanskelige livssituasjoner
? Hva er dine tanker på god kompetanse for en lærer
    a. Hvor viktig er deres evne til å gjenkjenne omsorgssvikt?
    b. Hva synes du lærere kan godt? (er det forskjell på lærer generasjonen, ung vs eldre?)
    c. Hva vet lærere for lite om?
    d. Varierer det i forhold til skolene?
? Hvordan vil du beskrive god kompetanse hos en barnevernspedagog?
    a. Hva tenker du barnevernspedagoger kan godt?
    b. Hva trenger barnevernspedagoger å vite mer om og bli bedre på?
    c. Trenger barnevernspedagogene noe utover det læreren behøver?
? Kan du fortelle om en erfaring med den «beste» mulige lærer
    a. Hvorfor valgte du denne opplevelsen?
? Hva er din nærmeste opplevelse med den «beste» barnevernsarbeider
    a. Hva gjorde denne opplevelsen så bra?
? Hvordan må voksne oppføre seg for at du skal føle deg trygg og ivaretatt
    a. I hvor stor grad er omsorgsevner viktig i forhold til faglig kompetanse?
    b. Hvilken rolle spiller de voksnes kroppsspråk, stemme og varme øyne når de arbeider med deg?
    c. Forventer du at voksne skal være i stand til å lese dine følelser ut ifra ditt kroppsspråk? Hvorfor?

Samarbeidspraksis:

Under dette temaet er spørsmålenes oppgave å hente informasjon om hva samarbeid er, hvordan det skjer, hvilke metoder blir brukt og hvorfor samarbeid er viktig. Spørsmålene jobber med å finne de ferdighetene som allerede eksisterer, hvilke som bør forbedres og hva som må læres.

? Hva betyr samarbeid for deg
? Er det viktig at det eksisterer tverrfaglig samarbeid mellom deg, Skolen og Barnevernet? Hvorfor det?
? Kunne du være så snill å dele en erfaring som handler om samarbeid mellom deg, Skolen og Barnevernet

? Hva mener du må være til stedet for at et godt og produktivt tverrfaglig teamwork kan skje mellom Barnevernet, Skolen og deg
   a. Kan du beskrive hva du anser som dårlig samarbeid?
   b. Hvordan føler du Skolen og Barnevernet klarer å samarbeide?
   c. Er det noe du savner i det tverrfaglige samarbeidet mellom deg, Skolen og Barnevernet? Hva mangler?
? Har du noen gang opplevd at det er et krav til deg om å kommunisere slik som voksne gjør for å bli hørt av lærere og barnevernspedagoger? Hvis ja, hva er dine tanker angående det?
   a. Hvis du velger å snakke ut, blir du sett på som vanskelig i de voksnes øyne? Hvis ja, på hvilke måter kommer det frem?
   b. Har du erfart at det du sier blir tatt imot med mistenksomhet og blir tolket feil?
   c. Eks: heil betyr velkommen på russisk, men nordmenn tenker ofte nazisme. Har du opplevd at det du sier blir tillagt feil betydning?
   d. Skjer det at dine synspunkter blir oversatt til symptomer når du, skolen og barnevernet samarbeider?
? Hvem bestemmer hvilken person som skal være din voksne kontakt på skolen?
   a. Hvordan påvirker dette samarbeidet?
   b. Er det best for deg å velge denne personen selv? Hvorfor?
? Hvilke elementer på være på plass for at du skal kunne føle at du blir tatt på alvor og at din stemme blir hørt i samarbeidet mellom deg, Skolen og Barnevernet
   a. Opplever du at de voksne noen gang spør deg om hvordan de kan hjelpe? Hvis ja, hvordan hjelper det samarbeidet? Hvis nei, burde de? Hvorfor?
? Har du regelmessige møter mellom Skolen, Barnevernet og deg? Hvis ja, hvem deltar på disse møtene og hvordan er de organisert?
   a. Finner du disse møtene nyttige? Hvis ja, hvorfor? Hvis nei, hva kunne vært annerledes for at de skal kunne være nyttige?
   b. Kan skolen være en plass til å snakke om ting hvis barnevernspedagogen ikke er hjelpsom nok? Hvis ja, hvordan vil det hjelpe? Hvis nei, hvorfor?
   c. Har du noen gang opplevd at enten deg, Skolen eller Barnevernet har uenighet i samarbeidet? Hvordan ble det løst?
   d. Har du blitt pålagt ting å gjøre som din deltagelse i samarbeidet?
   e. Hvis du brøt disse, ble det oppfattet som løftebrudd, at du blir gitt et moralsk press?
   f. Tenker du at det bryter med tanken om at samarbeid skal være uten hierarki?
   g. Har du fått velge ting som når på dagen et samarbeidsmøte skal skje?
? Hvordan blir dine menneskerettigheter ivaretatt i samarbeidet mellom deg, skolen og barnevernet?
? Hvilken type samarbeid har du erfart mest – samordning som er organisert og har element av tvang, eller samarbeid som er mindre formalisert og frivillig?
? Har du noen gang lagt merke til om skolen føler seg underlagt barnevernet som samarbeidspartner?

? Samarbeidsplikten tilsier at barnevernet er pliktet til å samarbeide med andre etater slik som skolen. Dette er fordi skolen har ressurser som barnevernet kan dra nytte av. De kan være rådgivere og informanter. Hva tenker du om det?

? Har du erfart å ikke ha tro på samarbeidet?

? Barn i barnevernet kan oppleve en venteperiode før de får tilgang på skolegang. Hvordan kan tverrfaglig samarbeid hjelpe til med å minimalisere eller fjerne denne ventingen for barn og unge

<u>Hindringer knyttet til tverrfaglig samarbeid:</u>

Ved å stille spørsmål om hindringer i tverrfaglig samarbeid, er formålet å komme i dybden på hva intervjukandidaten tenker om samarbeid. Det å få innsikt om deltakerens perspektiver og erfaringer angående samarbeid, kan det identifisere dagens samarbeidspraksis, hva som fungerer og ikke fungerer og hvor problemene oppstår. Hensikten er å utforske det som er god praksis og hvordan den kan bli enda bedre.

? Hvilke barrierer forhindrer at du, Skolen og Barnevernet kan jobbe sammen og samarbeide?
  a. Hvordan kan disse bli løst?

? Hva tenker du om at Skolen og Barnevernet har møter om deg uten at du er tilstede og kan dele dine meninger

? Hvilken rolle har loven om taushetsplikt for deg
  a. Synes du lærere har god nok kunnskap om taushetsplikten? Hvordan?
  b. Har du noen erfaringer eller tanker om barnevernspedagogen og lærerens lov om taushetsplikt? Kunne du delt det?
  c. Påvirker taushetsplikten samarbeidet mellom dere?

? Hva er dine første tanker når jeg sier bekymringsmelding? Kunne du utdypet disse tankene?
  a. Hva er dine tanker om lærerens plikt til å melde ifra mistanke og ikke ved sikker kunnskap om omsorgssvikt hos en elev?
  b. I din mening, hvordan er skolens evne til å håndtere bekymringsmeldinger? Kan du utdype dette noe mer?
  c. Er det noen prosedyrer rundt dette med meldeplikt som skolen ikke praktiserer som du burde iverksette?
  d. Før fantes det segregeringspraksis i skolen. Det betyr at elever i vanskelige situasjoner ble tatt ut fordi de utgjorde en for stor utfordring for skolen. Synes du skolen i dag har evner til å være den støtten og hjelpen de trenger for å gi elever i vanskelige livssituasjoner et godt tilbud?
  e. Har skolen nok omsorg?

? Skolen skal ha et internt hjelpe og tiltaksapparat. Har du merket noe til det?

? Skolen mener de ofte er en passiv part i samarbeidet med barnevernet. Dette er muligens fordi barnevernet ikke pliktet til å informere skolen om tiltak som skjer for en elev. Skolen ønsker et tettere samarbeid og informasjon over de tiltakene som blir iverksatt. Synes du dette er nyttig for samarbeidet mellom elev og skolen, barnevernet?

? Har du noen alternative forslag for hvordan elev, skole og barnevern kan jobbe tettere sammen?

? Staten er opptatt av å forene fagkompetanser i de ulike etatene for å tilby best mulig hjelp og samarbeid til et barn og dets beste. Det tenkes at en faggruppe aleine kan ikke vite hva som er barnets beste. I din erfaring, hvordan har du sett de ulike gruppene komme sammen å jobbe for ditt beste?

? Fastsatte møter er ofte stedet hvor samarbeidsdeltakerne kan komme sammen og samarbeide. Har du sett at enkelte har endret syn på en sak etter å ha hørt andres synspunkter?

   a. Får alle dele sitt synspunkt og interesser?
   b. Så du noen gang at enkelte dominerte møtet og at likestilling var fjernet?
   c. Har du opplevd skolen og barnevernet som forståelsesorientert for å finne gode løsninger?
   d. Er du positiv til et samarbeid mellom deg, skolen og barnevernet?

? Lærere og barnevernspedagoger blir ofte introdusert til barn og unge som har opplevd omsorgssvikt gjennom mappe notater. Hvordan påvirker det samarbeidet mellom deg, Skolen og Barnevernet om de kjenner deg som person eller fra en mappefolder?

   a. Hvordan påvirker tillitt og relasjoner samarbeidet mellom dere?
   b. På hvilke måter førsøker de voksne å bli kjent med deg?
   c. Har du erfart overfladisk behandling? Hvordan skjedde det?
   d. Hvordan kan en lærer og barnevernspedagog «by» på seg selv for å skape et bedre samarbeid med deg?
   e. Hva tror du hindrer deg fra å stole på voksne slik at du stopper å snakke med dem og heller «faker» at ting er bra?

? Har du noen gang opplevd at lærere er mer opptatt av kaffepausen enn å snakke med deg og dine utfordringer der og da?

   a. Hva slags konsekvenser har dette hatt for samarbeidet mellom deg og skolen?
   b. Skjer det noen gang at de voksne beskriver en hendelse ut ifra sitt perspektiv og ikke slik du beskriver det? Hvordan påvirker det din posisjon i samarbeidet?
   c. På hvilke måter opplever du at læreren og barnevernspedagogen behandler deg som en samarbeidspartner?
   d. Hvordan har du sett at din innflytelse har påvirket beslutningsprosesser? Eller blir beslutningene tatt for det?
   e. Har du hatt innflytelse på hva slags tiltak som er riktig for deg?
   f. Hvordan er vedtaksprosessen (tiden) når du, skolen og barnevernet samarbeider? Tar det lang tid før man får hjelp?

? Har du opplevd at skolen eller barnevernet skylder på andre for å kaste et problem videre for å ikke ta ansvaret hvis de feiler med å gi riktig hjelp?

? Eksisterer det noen gang at de voksne i samarbeidet med deg, har forhånds tanker og perspektiver som er skadelig for synet de har til deg

   a. Er disse skadelige for samarbeidet?

? Er kjærlighet, åpenhet, medbestemmelse og ydmykhet, viktige i samarbeidspraksisen? Hvis ja, hvorfor?

a. Har du sett disse egenskapene og holdningene i ditt eget samarbeid?

b. Trenger noen av egenskapene og holdningene å forbedres? Hvis ja, hvilke, hvorfor og av hvem?

c. Opplever du å føle deg like verdifull som voksne du tilnærmer deg på skolen og i barnevernet? Kan du utdype?

? Klare skolen å omfavne nye elever som kommer fra et ståsted hvor de har flyttet mye pga omplassering i institusjoner eller fosterhjem? Hvis ja, utdyp, hvis nei, hvorfor ikke?

a. Er den voksne kontaktpersonen din nok tilstede for at du får nødvendig hjelp på skolen?

b. Hvordan samarbeider Skolen og Barnevernet for at elever kan få en trygg overgang til ny skole ved flytting?

Barn og unges drømmesituasjon for fremtidig samarbeidspraksis:

Dette siste emnet er organisert slik at personen som blir intervjuet kan beskrive sitt drømmeideal angående samarbeid mellom seg selv, Skolen og Barnevernstjenesten. Denne besvarelsen skal styrke og validere svar fra tidligere spørsmål samt gi frihet for at personen kan visualisere samarbeidet. Dette kan gi rom for at flere viktige aspekter kommer til overflaten.

? Kan du beskrive din drømmesituasjon for hvordan du, Barnevernet og Skolen kan samarbeide for at du skal ha det bra på skolen?

a. Hvorfor foretrekker du denne måten?

b. På hvilke områder skulle du ønske at Skolen og Barnevernet bidro mer for å få et bedre samarbeid, slik at du kan føle deg glad og trygg?

c. Hva er viktigst for å få et bedre liv?

Hva synes du om disse tipsene for et bedre samarbeid?

Ordstyrer – person som passer på at alle parter får si sitt synspunkt.at argumentasjon forblir saklig.

Begrunnelsestvang – må oppgi grunn til tiltak eller et synspunkt.

Rollebytte – partene må se saken ut fra de andres ståsted og argumentere ut fra det.

Problemforståelse og valg av tiltak skal defineres gjennom prosessen av partenes felleskap.

Er det noen andre jeg bør snakke med for å få enda bedre oversikt over hvordan samarbeidet foregår..

Er et noen andre tips du har som samarbeidet mellom skolen, deg og barnevernet kan dra nytte av?

? Er det noe annet (hva som helst) du ønsker å snakke om som du føler vi ikke har diskutert enda?

? Har du lyst til å tilføye noe til det vi allerede har pratet om?

Interview Guide

<u>Problem area:</u>

How does children and youth, from their experiences and perspectives, consider and appraise collaborative practice between the School and the Child Welfare institution and themselves?

<u>Purpose:</u>

The purpose is to gain increased knowledge about:

1. How interdisciplinary teamwork between the school and the child welfare institutions takes place (from children and youth's experiences and perspectives related to child neglect)
2. Possible obstacles that hinder or cause difficulties for collaborative work between the school, the child welfare and the pupil
3. What can be done differently (between all parties) so that collaborative practice can be strengthened and be of advantage for children and youth's present and future life

<u>The interview will deal with four main subjects:</u>

1. Child neglect – teacher's and child worker's competences
2. Collaborative practice between the School, the Child welfare institution and the pupil
3. Obstacles related to collaborative practice between the school, child welfare and the pupil, such as laws on confidentiality and disclosure.
4. Children and youth's dream situation for future collaborative practice between the institutions and themselves

<u>Privacy:</u>

All sensitive information that is shared during the interview will be made anonymous and treated confidential

Thank you for participating 😊

<u>Introductory questions:</u>

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Your experience with being a "Barnevernsproff" in Change Factory

<u>Child neglect – teacher's and child worker's competences:</u>

- What do you think about when I say, "child neglect"
    a. Could you define when child neglect of serious nature is?
- What attributes and qualities do you consider essential for a teacher to have to be qualified to work with children who experience difficult life circumstances?

- What attributes and qualities do you consider essential for a child welfare worker to have to be qualified to work with children who experience difficult life circumstances?
- What are your thoughts on good competences for a teacher?
    a. How important is their ability to recognize child neglect?
    b. What do you think teachers know well?
    c. What do they know too little about?
- What are your thoughts on good competences for a child welfare worker?
    a. What do you think child welfare workers know well?
    b. What do they know too little about?
- What is your closest experience with the best possible teacher?
    a. Why did you choose this experience?
- What is your closest experienced with the best possible child welfare worker?
    a. What made this experience so good?
- How must the adults behave for you to feel safe?
    a. How important is caring competence in relation to professional competence?
    b. What role does the adult's body language, voice and warm eyes have when working with you?
    c. Do you expect adult's to be able to read your feelings by observing your body language? Why?

Collaborative practice:

- What does collaboration mean to you?
- Is it important that there exists collaborative practice between you, the school and child welfare institution? How come?
- Could you share an experience of the occurrence of collaborative practice between the school, child welfare institution and you?
    a. What do you think must be present for a good/productive interdisciplinary teamwork between you, the school and child welfare institution?
    b. What is unfruitful teamwork?
    c. How do you feel the school and child welfare institutions are able to cooperate?
    d. Is there something that you miss in the interdisciplinary collaboration practise from either yourself, the school or the child welfare institution? What is missing? Why/ why not?
- Have you ever felt that there is a demand to be able to communicate as adults do, to be heard by teachers and child welfare workers? If yes, what are your thoughts on that?
    a. If you speak, are you considered difficult in the eyes of the adults? If yes, in what ways?
- Who decides which adult is your contact person at school?
    a. Is it better for you to choose yourself? Why

- b. How does it influence the cooperation?
- What must be present for you to feel that you have a say or that your voice is heard, in the collaborative practice?
    - a. Do you ever experience the adults ever asking you how they can help? If yes, what do you think about that? If no, should they? Why?
- Do you have regular meetings with the school and child welfare together? If yes, who participate and how is the meetings organized?
    - a. Do you experience these meetings as useful? If no, what could be different?
    - b. Can the school be a place to talk about things if the child welfare worker is not helpful enough? If yes, how would it help? If no, why?
- Have you experienced that parties involved in the collaboration has disagreed? If yes, how was it resolved?
- Children in child welfare institutions can experience a waiting period to get schooling. How can interdisciplinary teamwork help minimizing this or eliminate the waiting for the child or youth?

<u>Obstacles related to collaborative practice:</u>

Collaborative practice between the school and child welfare organisations is to ensure that you receive best possible care.

- What barriers are most likely to prevent that you, the school and the child welfare institution to work together?
    - a. How can these be resolved?
- How do feel about the school and child welfare institution have meetings about you without your presence or your opinions?
    - a. What role does the law on confidentiality have for you?
    - b. Do you think teachers have good enough knowledge about confidentiality? Why?
    - c. Do you have any experiences or thoughts on child welfare's law on confidentiality and teacher's confidentiality? Would you mind sharing?
    - d. Does it influence your cooperation?
- What are your first thoughts when I say (bekymringsmelding). Could you expand on these thoughts?
- What do you think about teacher's duty to disclose any suspicion of child neglect with their pupils?
    - a. How do you think the school should handle disclosure?
- In what ways does it impact your teamwork if the adults know you as person or from a folder?
    - a. How does relations and trust to the teacher and the child welfare worker influence collaboration between all of you?
    - b. Do the adults work towards getting to know you?
    - c. Have you experienced superficial treatment? How was that?
    - d. How can a teacher and a child welfare worker "offer" themselves to create a better teamwork with you?

       e. What things do you think prevent you from trusting adults and stop talking to them and start "faking" that things are ok?

- Have you ever experienced that teachers are more concerned with their coffee break than your problems right here and now?
    - a. What consequences has this experience has had for the working together between you, the school and the child welfare worker?
- Does it ever occur that after a happening, that the adults write the event from their perspective and not your account? How does that influence your position in the teamwork?
- In what ways does the school and the child welfare worker treat you as a collaborator?
- Do the adults in the interdisciplinary teamwork, have any prescribed views on you as a child, that may be damaging for you to work together?
- Is love, openness, co-determinations and humility important in the collaborative practice? If yes, why?
    - a. How have you seen these attributes present in your teamwork?
    - b. Does any of the areas need to be improved? By whom? Why and how?
- Do you feel as valuable as any adult that you speak with in the school or the child welfare services? Expand?
- Does the school know how to embrace new pupils that experience being moved often between child welfare institutions or foster homes?
    - a. Is your contact teacher enough present for you to receive necessary help at school?
    - b. How does the child welfare contribute to a smooth transition when changing schools?
    - c. In what ways do you wish that the school and child welfare could contribute more for a better teamwork for you to be happy?

Children and youth's dream situation for future collaborative practice:

- Could you describe your dream situation on how you, child welfare services and the school should collaborate?
    - a. Why is this the preferred way?
    - b. What is most important for a better life?

Is there something else you would like to talk about that you feel we haven't discussed yet?

Would you like to add anything to what we have already talked about?

Appendix 7:

Additional empirical data Chapter 5

Showing care, encouragement and respect

P3.
R: Does the school have enough care and affection?
E: I will say yes. It varies from school from school really, but if you ask, they will help you. There was one teacher who wrote his phone number on the board and said, "if any of you need extra help with homework or anything else just send me a message after school", She cared beyond school hours and that means a lot.

P6.
S: You have the foundation and that is their ability to show love. Not like they love their spouse or anything, but that they care and really think about them, include them show that they are there for them. Especially for those who struggle. They must ask how they are, state that they care explicitly. I think that is most important. Not the academic stuff, but that they focus on caring and not being afraid to talk with children.

P7.
A: She was a brilliant teacher, the one I had when I changed foster homes. I could sit like this in class and look down and not be present and she would come to my desk and say "Do you know A, I see that you are in pain, that it is difficult to take in knowledge know. Why don't we take a ride to my farm and you can pet the lambs?". I remember that meant so much because it gave me a break from everyday life and made things easier.

Being informed – having a say

P7.
R: Is it important for there to be interdisciplinary collaboration between you, the school and the child welfare organisation?
A: Yes…it is good that teachers receive information so that they can facilitate extra, but they must collaborate with the child. For instance, the child welfare organisation cannot just cooperate with the school without children's permission. The child should contribute to the decision on what teachers can know. The child can provide information regarding what teachers can help with and how the school can better facilitate for their welfare.

Collaborating with children -being treated as humans -avoiding stigma

P1.
L: She knows me really well. She is the person that understand me the most. She takes personal initiative in me. Sometimes she works with papers and on occasion that makes her really angry because she wants me to have a normal life. She is just so engaged in me.

P5.
H: When we arrive at the classroom we stand in line and everyone is given a hug. Not every teacher is good at that, most are good at academic stuff. The academic competences are really important, but it can be placed in the backpack and initial meeting with the pupils should be with the heart.

P6.
S: That must be him, the on at upper secondary level. He shared a lot about himself at the same time as he limited himself. He was focused on caring for us pupils. One should think of children as bonus kids that you are lucky to take care of.

Appendix 8:

Additional empirical data Chapter 6

Definition of collaboration

P2.
R: What does collaboration mean to you?
C: Collaboration means that I stand in the middle and that I can participate and decide what is best for me. Because, I have felt on my body what my experience has done with me. And because of that, I have the most important knowledge concerning what I feel can help, but it is also really important too that the adults suggest things that can help. Especially if the child does not know anything to suggest and that together we can find what sounds best. Perhaps we teenagers have similar language, but we feel and think very differently.

P3.
R: What does collaboration mean to you?
E: To be cooperative…that you take the time to listen to what I have to say, and then I will take the time to listen to you. That we collaborate in that manner. It has to be mutual, not just one-sided, not just one way.

Collaboration is for adults

P1.
R: Was there something you missed within the interdisciplinary collaboration between yourself, the school and the child welfare institution?
L: I experienced a little in the beginning, that I was less informed about things. That I had to be very adult like and adopt myself to their situation. Rest my case, but that is not good after a little while, because then there was no use in me attending those meetings when I did not even understand what they said. From time to time I had to use their professional language and that caused me great frustration because then I could not participate so much.

P2.
R: Right now, how do you feel that the school and the child welfare services are able to collaborate with you?
C: I have not experienced any form of collaboration. I have not even heard about it.
R: Have you met others in care who have experienced it?
C: Not that I have talked with. We do know that adults talk to other adults around us and that is a clear sign that we do not know where information goes.
R: Should the school and the child welfare be obligated to invite you to meetings that is about you?
C: They must! But it is my choice if I want to be there or not or anything else that is about my life and my childhood.

P4 and P5.
R: Why not, what could have been done differently to make them useful?
H: It was the same questions every time. "yes, how are you, what do you think about this and that?". It was so little constructive sitting there. It was the same thing that happened every time, the same talk and I felt it was more for the adults than me.
I: Yes, and it is about that thing where they all (adults) tell their assumptions on how the child is.
H: Yes, and then I just sit there thinking "okay, like is that what they are thinking".
I: And you are just listening and really do not have a right to say anything.

R: What must be present for there to be a productive and good collaboration between the three of you?
S: One must include children or else it is just adults that sit there and drinks coffee and decide thing without any knowledge of the child's opinions, what the child thinks. You can say or talk to me first about thinks and then retell them, but it is not the same because then it is your words, your expressions. And telling things through someone…I do not have faith in that. It does not work.
R: Do you have regular meetings between the school, the child welfare and yourself?
S: I had these meetings where I got to participate in part two. I could say what I thought in the meeting's part two, but all the decisions were made in part one where my parents were. I did not feel safe to be in a meeting with my parents and could not attend on part one. I told them this, but they did not listen.
R: Did you get to decide on somethings?
S: NO! I did not decide anything.
R: What about when a meeting should take place, where or anything like that?
S: Nothing. I wonder how they can defend the convention on the rights of the child in all this, that makes me excited. I can mention a little concerning individual learning plans that the schools have. Are you familiar with these?
R: Yes
S: The child should be able to decide a little and to see the individual learning plan. I did not see mine and they wrote a lot of bullocks that I could have improved or corrected. Where was my voice in this plan? I do not think that is right. If one is to make such plans, then you just cannot go around and make one. One must collaborate with the child. It is so important.

P6.
R: What do you think child welfare workers should know?
S: To be able to talk with the child and not those damn speaking techniques they have. They just repeat what the child have said "yes, you were beaten like that and that, mhm".

P3.
R: What are teachers good at?
E: They know their academics and they are pretty good at formulating themselves correctly. You want to be able to talk to a buddy because then it easier to talk directly from the heart. You do not have to place a filter on yourself in order to say things more politically correct.
R: What about child welfare workers?
E: They are usually good at talking to people. They should be!. It is important what goes out of the kid or teenagers' mouth. Not directly how you would like it verbalized.
R: Have you experienced demands for you to communicate like adults to be heard?
E: There are some teacher, but not child welfare workers that I have met. There are some that do not like that you use slang and that you must put on a filter to speak politically correct. And that is very hard because it blocks you from saying much of what you want to express.

Reclaiming control

P2.
R: What do you think cause you to stop trusting adults, prevent you from talking with them and instead fake that things are ok?
C: If information is just passed on, that choices are made without me. Then I might give up on that person because I was forgotten in the collaboration. Then it is better to fake that things are good and rather wait to come closer to someone else later.

P4 and P5.
R: Have you experienced that what you say is received with suspicion and interpreted wrongly?

H: All the time.

R: And how does that effect your collaboration?

H: I get really like "fuck you adults", when it becomes like "yes, this and this took place and that happened", when they don't have a clue to why I did something. They might know what I did, but not what caused it. If I received a phone call from my dad that made me sad. They have a micro part of the story and I am the one with the blueprint. So, when adults assume things, I don't want to tell what really happened.

I: Mhm, yes!

<u>P6.</u>

R: Have you been subjected to do things as your part of the collaboration?

S: Yes, that thing about the group room. I was yelled at for leaving without waiting for that bastard. Sorry the language.

R: Do you consider that to break with the ideology of not having a hierarchy in the collaboration?

S: Yes. I think that when it becomes this top down attitude, then it is like, why should I care. One must be able to talk to each other. Also, I think that when someone is annoyed and is in a bad mood and perhaps does not have much capacity for me that day, then say it! Say "I am in a bad mood because of this" or because you are just tired, or the kid threw up all night. Because then I can show understanding instead of just thinking you are in a crappy mood. It is about collaboration. Because why should not I be allowed to be upset if the teacher is. One must be equal. One must talk to each other. One must be honest. Then all the premises with respect must be at the basic core.

When the powerplay becomes too straining

<u>P4 and P5.</u>

R: If you choose to talk about something are you reviewed as difficult in the eyes of the adults?

I: If I complain about school or complain to the school about the child welfare institution they just like "no, you just don't understand it correctly" and then they yell at you like "Now you are just being difficult". That I am just saying problems that do not really exist and stuff. I feel there is very little understanding.

R: What consequences follows this treatment?

H: I think that if you sort of suspects what children says, like what happened to me was that I just lost my voice in the collaboration and then I kind of gave up.

I: It breaks your confidence. Because actions take place that you did not agree on and they do not collaborate with you, they just assume and have this narrow thinking.

R: Do you think this happens because adults think they know best?

H: Yes

I: Yes, and I think they all say "yes, adults always know best": They do not often listen, and I am sick and tired of it. They do not know what is best for our lives.

Children's best interest

<u>P5.</u>

R: What should teachers know well?

H: …It is so important that a teacher can talk truthfully and not like try to shield or spare children. So, if I tell the teacher something, she must be able to talk to me about what she is thinking before she goes further with it…And most importantly a teacher must be able to see behind behaviour. No matter what, the teacher must understand why there is self-harming, tantrums, if a child hits or skip school. Be able to think what lies behind instead of seeing what happens and take measures accordingly.

H: It is very dependent on the person. Or, the adults do as well as they can, they only try ensuring our best interest. But I think that they act too rashly and have that look that I am sick, or pitiful or different.

<u>P7.</u>
R: Do you have an alternative suggestion to how you, the school and the child welfare can closer work together?
A: Have the pupil more in focus. Of course, like it is in the law today one has to work with what is best for the child, but who decides what is best? I think that for it to actually look like anything that is the best interest of the child then the child's voice has to be the foundation. That kind of has to be the foundation for everything that will take place. So, adults should of course have opinions about what is the best for the child, and it is not like supposed to be that the child is only to get his or her will, but it has to be in the foundation, the child's voice and views. Because that is extremely important, otherwise you cannot call it the best interest of the child. Then you could call it adult's opinions on what is best for the child, but not what is best for the child.

Children as "branded" cases

<u>P1.</u>
R: What is "everything like before"?
L: They think that as long as children have the same diagnose, same language and stuff like that they should be treated the same. But that is very wrong since all people think differently. You think that yourself too! Adults are not the same, they also think differently, and the child welfare worker know that from their own lives that adults are not the same and do not think the same. That goes for children too.

<u>P2.</u>
R: Does that vary from school to school?
C: Yes. But I have also experienced that even though they know what is going on, like I changed from being quiet to act out and I saw that they teachers saw me, but no one did anything.

<u>P3.</u>
R: Have you experienced that the school, or the child welfare or you blame others for something going wrong?
E: Yeah, obviously. The child welfare was very fond of blaming my parents, at least my first contact person. He blamed my parents instead of seeing that he did wrong. But rather made my parents look like the villains.
R: What consequences did that bring?
E: You gain very little trust towards that person when you see they are not capable of seeing what they are doing and keep placing the blame on someone else. You just think "Why are you working with this if you cannot see your own mistakes"

<u>P6.</u>
R: Have you experienced that the agencies blame each other for things going wrong?
S: Yes. The child welfare blamed BUP a little, and the school blamed the child welfare, and they all blamed each other a little actually.
R: Did anyone take the blame on themselves?
S: No.

<u>P7.</u>
R: Did you ever experience that adults tossed a problem over to the next person?
A: Yes. The end road is BUP

Viewing children as sick

R: Do you mean that they lack individual adaption?
E: Yes. They categorize and then you get help you do not need at all, which makes things go wrong and create more fuzz.
R: Are your views ever translated to symptoms by the school and the child welfare?
E: Yeah! They started to see me like I had a disability or something. They look at you like you are depressed and never happy. But even if things are challenging, I am capable of having a good time. I am not depressed 24/7 just because things are hard. So, you get placed in that box. When they come to speak to you, they are like "how are you" with this "poor thing" voice. That only makes you think of the bad stuff. Like it is nice that you as how I am, but if I am happy, do not make me think of that situation because then I will not be happy anymore.

Building, maintaining and develop good relations

Casefiles:

P4 and P5.
R: Should adults be allowed to read the file?
H and I: No
H: Not if the child is not ok with it. And usually children would not like you to read their file because there is damned much that is written there. There are many who get upset when reading their file when older because it shows many thoughts that adults have had about you.

P7.
R: Teachers and child welfare workers can often be introduced to children in care through files. What do you think about that?
A: That is very dangerous. Because like with me, what is written about me, and who I really am, are to very different persons. My foster parents, teachers or other adults never call the child welfare organisation to tell about my good actions. They only tell the shit I do and negative smaller episodes.
R: Your weaknesses?
A: Yeah, and there is a lot of shit in my file because the positive is not reported.

Show feelings/act normal:

P1.
R: How must adults behave for you to feel safe and cared about?
L: They must be human. That they enter the room ordinarily, speak normally, then I am ok.
R: What does human mean?
L: That you do not think that "no, now I have to sit upright, have more respect", but rather just sit, chill and speak like a normal person. Just be yourself.
R: What role does the adult's bodily language, voice and warm eyes have when working with you?
L: With me, not so much. But if she looks really bitchy, uptight or like a stick, then I do not want to open up and talk to that person.

P6.
R: What expertise should child welfare workers have?
S: You have does child welfare workers who when speaking with children are likely to sit there with their legs in cross, look seriously and do not show emotions.
R: What role does the adult's bodily language, voice and warm eyes have when working with you?

S: It plays a part with safety. If you stand there and look dead serious and do not show your feelings, then it makes me feel unsafe.

R: Is that unnatural?

S: Yes, and that is what they teach the kid. That is something they can stop doing. Because the end of the road is that I want to see a reaction when I tell you something painful. Like a tear, or something. If you do not like to cry, you are not to be forced to cry but you can say "this makes me sad, children should not experience this" or maybe that it makes you feel angry.

Being rude:

<u>P6.</u>
R: I can talk for a long time and they must have breaks. They have the right for lunch, but if it is like that first talk, then perhaps the break can be spent at a group room with the child and bring their coffee and lunch

Pedestal:

<u>P3:</u>
R: How should adults behave for you to feel safeguarded?

E: That they do not place themselves on a pedestal over you.

Two against one:

<u>P3.</u>
R: What must be present for there to be a good and productive collaboration?

E: Everybody must talk to each other. Not two against one. The collaboration will then just be two parties and not all three.

<u>P3.</u>
R: Have you noticed if the teachers are open about working together with the child welfare?

E: Yeah... They think it is awful that they must do it, but they will collaborate because someone is having an awful life situation. So, they will do it.

<u>P6.</u>
S: It is very dangerous when adults sit down with the purpose that we will decide upon something. Because, adult agree with each other too easily and then they forget the child in all of this. That is a risk with adults. And when they first have agreed on something, they often will continue to quickly agree with each other. My teachers were only puppets to the child welfare organisation.

Forced collaboration:

<u>P3.</u>
R: Have you been forced to cooperate?

E: Yes. That was probably the biggest mistake the child welfare did. There were alcohol issues in my family and they made me responsible to watch over them. I should not have extra burdens like that, to check how they are holding up. That put weight on my shoulders. So, there was some force obviously and things were done mistakenly. But on the other side there was a good collaboration. They did not place themselves higher in rank than me like Nazis, but good at cooperating.

<u>P4 and P5.</u>
R: If you broke these was it received as betrayal?

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H: yes, yeah

I: yes, yes, yes

H: Or, well, not betrayal but more like "you are not capable of keeping deals", and then it is like "Well I did not agree to this, you just decided that I had to do it and I did not oblige".

Information flow – confidentiality and discretion – keeping trust

<u>P1.</u>

L: No, I have not experienced it, but someone in my class last year was not well and then she was just told to seek a psychologist. And that was said out loud during class. But that has never happened to me.

<u>P2.</u>

R: How can confidentiality be best explained?

C: They must say that we abide the law of confidentiality and that this mean that we are not allowed to tell others what you say unless we think we must. But if that is the case then we want to collaborate with you about what we will tell, who we tell, why we tell and how we tell it. That is collaboration because then we know where the information is passed. Adults cannot think that they can tell things to others because they think it is not so bad because it was such a small thing, but to me that can mean catastrophe.

<u>P6.</u>

R: Thoughts on confidentiality?

S: If I say you must not pass this information on, then you should wait to report it to your boss even if it is about child neglect. You have a duty to report, but can it wait and who will that benefit? The child might have lived with abuse for 13 years and waiting two or three days might be best instead of you rushing to report. The child is most important. You must report at some point but is there a rush? If you must report right away, inform the child and ask, "how can I do this in a manner that is good for you; what can we say and not tell?" and explain who they will talk with if it is the head master or directly to the child welfare. The child should be able to guide the information flow. If the child does not want the information to move to a second party, then that should be kept. Unless it about life and health. Then you explain to the child that this information must be passed on.

<u>P7.</u>

R: Does teachers have a good understanding regarding the law of confidentiality?

A: Yes, but they do not explain what it means for us. They just say, "If you want to tell us something, we a duty of confidentiality". They do not explain that they can send letter of concern to the child welfare without us knowing. Or if we tell something they we do not like, they can call our parents and tell what we said.

R: Is there a crash between duty to disclose and right to access knowledge that parents have?

A: Yes, and that is life endangering for children. Because you do not know what will happen.

<u>P6.</u>

R: Does teachers know their duties regarding confidentiality?

S: No. The lack knowledge on what can be said and what must be kept. Like, what can be said out loud in class and what cannot.

<u>P1.</u>

R: Are there ways in which the teacher should proceed to make the child feel less uncomfortable?

L: They should not take the child out of class. Kids hate that. It should not be like that. Things should be done more discreetly like pretend to have pupil conversation and inform the class that several will be taken out of class so that no one gets suspicions of you.

R: Does the law on confidentiality affect the collaboration?
E: Some get too obsessed with it. And that can easily annoy. Like this one teacher did not want to hear thing because he was afraid, he could not keep the knowledge. For me that was not so dangerous, but because of it I could not share what I needed to say and then my perspective was not shared. It was always like "could you phrase yourself like this". So, then it was not possible to share.
R: Do teachers have adequate knowledge regarding confidentiality?
E: Yes, absolutely.
R: How?
E: They inform you right away if there is something with the child welfare. And they tell how they will not forward information because of confidentiality. Well, at least to me they explained this.

Ensuring a steady education for children

P6.
R: Children in public care may experience a waiting period before regaining access to schooling. How can interdisciplinary collaboration help to minimise or remove this waiting?
S: Yes. With me they waited way too long because they wanted to make some assessment in regard to some threats. But so far, I had not killed anyone…then there was this teacher who asked my acute foster mom if not I could just start right away. She agreed to this. Then I was yelled at by the child welfare organisation later. A child should just be allowed to start right away because adults are limited anyways on how much the can facilitate. Of course, if the child is a danger to others, like code 7 or code 6 with secret addresses and stuff, then one must prepare. But if it just usual stuff then it is better to dive in. I think it is worse to wait.
There could also be a better collaboration with BUP school or hospital schools. There are people there that are qualified to teach. Again, I think the outset should be to get the child back in school as soon as possible. But if the child needs to wait, then that must be considered too. At least try within a week to get the child back to school.